



Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-95-042
Friday
3 March 1995

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Islamic Affairs

'Terrorist' Implicates MB in Islamic Group Actions

NC0303082895 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic
24 Feb 95 p 17

[Report by Ahmad Musa]

[FBIS Translated Text] In his confessions before the Suhaj public prosecution officers, terrorist Ahmad Hasan 'Ali Hasan, a member of the banned Muslim Brotherhood [MB], revealed serious details about some Brotherhood members' enrollment in the military wing of the so-called Islamic Group in Suhaj and their training in the use of automatic weapons in a mountainous area of al-Manshah. The defendant gave the names of several members of the dissolved Brotherhood who have joined the terrorist groups. The prosecution office ordered the immediate arrest of the 12 fugitive defendants and the detention of terrorist Hasan for 15 days.

The defendant, a teacher in al-Manshah, Suhaj, told Khalid 'Awad, head of the prosecution office, who started the investigation supervised by Counselor 'Irfan Siddiq, the Suhaj prosecution office general attorney, that he joined the banned Brotherhood in 1987 and took part in all its activities. He added that in early 1992 he contacted Islamic Group elements in Suhaj through a member of the banned Brotherhood, attended meetings and seminars held at al-Bandar mosques, and established close ties with the Islamic Group last year, joining its military wing. He said he met deceased leader Mahmud Sayyid Salim, who supervised his military training in the use of automatic weapons, in the Naj' Abu-Khishanah mountains in al-Manshah, south of Suhaj. He added that other elements, whose names he gave, also took part in the military training, and that he continued to use a military nom de guerre so that his movements would go undetected by the security bodies.

The defendant also said in his confessions that he nominated members of the dissolved Brotherhood for enrollment in the Islamic Group's military wing on the orders of Muhammad Sayyid Salim, to train them physically and militarily in preparation for terrorist actions the Islamic Group was planning in Suhaj, Qina, and Asyut. He revealed the extent of the links between groups from the dissolved Muslim Brotherhood and elements from the Islamic Group's military wing, which carried out assassinations, acts of sabotage, and attacks on trains, tourist ships, and civilian targets, which are condoned by terrorist thinking. He detailed the dissolved Brotherhood's ideology, plans, and actions in the country in preparation for seizing power and establishing what is called the Islamic caliphate. The Islamic Group idea is based on using criminal actions in an attempt to bring down the regime and destabilize it. Both the terrorist groups and the Muslim Brotherhood have the same objective.

These important and serious confessions reveal that elements in the military wing, which included members of the banned Muslim Brotherhood, were being prepared and equipped to carry out terrorist operations in areas lying to the north and south of Suhaj in an attempt to reduce the pressure on the terrorists in Qina, Asyut, and al-Minya.

According to official information obtained by AL-AHRAM, the security sources, in the past few days, have detained all the Muslim Brotherhood members who were involved with detained Brotherhood member Hasan.

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 21 Feb

NC0203120895

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 21 February edition of the Arabic-language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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1. Professional Associations Protest Law 100
2. NATO Plans To Confront Islamists Detailed
3. Prosecution Continues Detention of 26 MB Members
4. Chief Editor Hails Professional Associations' Historic Stand
5. Engineers Association Secretary General Interviewed
6. Report Says Repression Continues in al-Minya Governorate
7. Writer Defends MB Presence in Professional Associations
8. Mashhur Defends MB Against Charges of Helping Terrorists
9. Columnist Hails National Unity at Fast-Breaking Dinner

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS PROTEST LAW 100

AL-SHA'B publishes on pages 1 and 6 a 1,000-word report by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad, Khalid Yunus, Mu'tazz al-Hadidi, and Subhi Buhayri detailing the government's ban on holding the general meeting of professional associations on the premises of the Egyptian Medical Association [EMA] due to its plans to stage a "peaceful march" to protest the government's law on elections for professional associations. After detailing the steps and heavy security measures taken by the Interior Ministry to prevent members of the association from reaching and entering the EMA premises, the report adds that "only around 150 professionals were able to enter the building. The security forces of terrorism thrashed four professionals who tried to enter the building, arrested three others, two of whom were later released. The security commands lied to the professionals and told them that the hall was full." The report then cites Dr. Anwar Shihatah, the EMA treasurer as telling those who entered the building that "what happened to the professionals is a message to the masses of Egyptian people. We reject this method of dealing with the professional associations' issues, and we will defend

their freedom to the last breath. The best evidence of this courageous stand by the professionals is that many of them came to the EMA building today carrying their shrouds with them." The report adds that a petition was submitted to the Administrative Court against the president, interior minister, and the Cairo security director demanding the cancellation of the decision to ban the peaceful march. A further report by Hamdi Taha from Aswan says that the coordination committee of the professional associations held a mass rally on Friday night under the slogan of "'Yes to Judicial Supervision but No to Interference.' The conferees denounced the blatant government interference in the associations' affairs through Law 100 and its amendments. They decided to organize a general strike by the professionals in Aswan at a date to be set later and to stage a sit-in to protest the suspicious amendment."

NATO PLANS TO CONFRONT ISLAMISTS DETAILED

A 500-word report by Mahmud Bakri on pages 1 and 6 details what he purports to be the NATO plans to confront Islamists and the contacts made with some Middle East countries for that purpose.

PROSECUTION CONTINUES DETENTION OF 26 MB MEMBERS

A 110-word report on pages 1 and 6 reports the Higher State Security Prosecution Office's decision to continue the detention of 26 members of the Muslim Brotherhood [MB] who were arrested on charges of forming a secret organization, and to release two others. The defense lawyers are cited as saying that "investigations of the detainees have stopped completely and there is no justification for their continued detention."

CHIEF EDITOR HAILS PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS' HEROIC STAND

A 1,400-word article by AL-SHA'B Chief Editor Majdi Ahmad Husayn on page 2 praises the "historic and bold stand" taken by the professional associations against the government's interference in their affairs. He says that the associations' insistence on escalating their campaign culminated in the march by thousands last week that blocked the streets of central Cairo. He adds that this firm stand is like a wall stopping the repression aimed at turning Egypt into a big prison. He goes on to say: "If the authority's principal motive is to strike at the Islamist trend in the professional associations, then the sons of the Islamic trend and all the opposition national and patriotic forces should realize that the authorities have opted for a scorched earth policy, that is, they are targeting everyone and want to burn down the house with all those inside it. The authorities do not possess any political party capable of a peaceful and democratic confrontation, therefore they are incapable of facing the Islamic trend at the ballot boxes. Thus, they decided to use what is in their view the easiest method, namely, burning down and destroying the associations and their

members." He then urges the opposition parties and papers who have either joined the government press in attacking the Islamic trend or opted for a neutral stand to take a clear joint stand against the government's action. Husayn argues that "it would be dangerous to confine this struggle to the government and the Islamic trend alone or regard it as a battle between these two, even though it is. The authorities' management of this conflict has turned it into an issue of public freedoms that affects all the trends, parties, and citizens."

ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION SECRETARY GENERAL INTERVIEWED

On the same page, AL-SHA'B carries a 1,600-word interview with Dr. Muhammad 'Ali Bishar, secretary general of the Engineers Association, on confrontation with the government over Law 100. Bishar lists the association's objections to the law and denies the accusation that it has stirred up trouble, saying that the association "operates legitimately within the constitution and expresses its views in ways that do not violate the law. Strikes, sit-ins, and peaceful marches are part of the legal protests guaranteed by the international agreements signed by Egypt." He then defends himself against the accusation that the association does not pay attention to the engineers' real problems, saying that the association does all it can to help solve the problems facing the engineers. He also denies accusations that the association acts on the orders of the MB, noting that the association and its committees include members from all political trends.

REPORT SAYS REPRESSION CONTINUES IN AL-MINYA GOVERNORATE

A 1,800-word report on page 2 by Ahmad Mahjub details what it claims to be the security forces' continued campaign of random arrests and raids on houses in the towns and villages of al-Minya Governorate despite "the abatement of violent actions in various areas of al-Minya Governorate compared to last month, which saw the number of victims rise to 68 policemen, Islamic Group members, and citizens killed." The bulk of the report consists of complaints by various citizens about the repressive measures that the security forces continue to take there, such as raids, arrests, temporary or otherwise arrests of citizens, and destruction of property.

WRITER DEFENDS MB PRESENCE IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

A 1,400-word article by Dr. 'Abd-al-Mun'im Abu-al-Futuh, the Secretary General of the Union of Arab Doctors, on page 5 acclaims the national and patriotic stands of the professional associations, stands which were "highlighted in the past 10 years ever since MB contested the professional associations' elections." He argues that the MB sought to maintain the associations representation in all sectors and therefore did not nominate its members to be association leaders, include other parties in its lists, or turn the associations into political

platforms. The author then says that the National Democratic Party [NDP], which controls the government and parliament, is not represented in the associations, where it would have to face the MB as a competitor, and adds that "this might explain the regime's insistence on no associations holding elections this year, but on holding People's Assembly and Consultative Council elections." He accuses the NDP government of "trying to monopolize all political action without giving the other forces inside Egypt an opportunity to serve the homeland." He ends by urging the people and regime to listen to the honest testimony of prominent association leaders who dealt with the MB.

MASHHUR DEFENDS MB AGAINST CHARGES OF HELPING TERRORISTS

Mustafa Mashhur writes a 2,000-word article on page 5 defending the MB against charges of supporting terrorist groups.

COLUMNIST HAILS NATIONAL UNITY AT FAST-BREAKING DINNER

In his 400-word column on page 12, writer Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus hails the demonstration of national unity at a fast-breaking dinner to which the "dissolved" MB invited representatives of various sectors of the people, including Copts and Nasirites, "and which was an example of true national unity that we want for our country and the best answer to those who say that the MB is a dissolved group. They are active in all spheres in force despite the government." Voicing his view that this meeting was not a quirk, 'Abd-al-Quddus says it "represents a firm strategy that we should adhere to if Egypt wants to get rid of its nightmare." After viewing the bad conditions in the country, ranging from the president's absolute power, high prices, unemployment, and corruption, to the imprisonment of thousands of people without trial, torture, and the government's interference in the professional associations' elections, 'Abd-al-Quddus accuses the regime of working to preoccupy the citizens with earning their living and thus distracting them from public affairs. He adds that therefore "we should exert our efforts and create the conditions for rallying the Islamic and nationalist forces behind the minimum demands, foremost of which are honest elections." He warns the rulers that the Egyptians are not meek and that they should be aware that "the people are good and patient in the extreme, but they do not relinquish their rights and no one knows what surprises they can come up with."

Palestinian Affairs

Al-Surani: Talks To Resume If Israel Shows 'Flexibility'

MM0203161695 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT
in Arabic 2 Mar 95 p6

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—The Palestinian leadership is currently

holding intensive contacts with the PLO Executive Committee members who boycotted the committee's Cairo meetings to persuade them to attend the Tunis meetings scheduled for mid-March.

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, Executive Committee Secretary Jamal al-Surani stressed the need for the participation of all members in the Tunis meetings because of the critical nature of the current phase and in order to face the Israeli policy of procrastination and intransigence.

Al-Surani emphasized that there was not a single reason for boycotting the Cairo meetings. He underscored the need for Palestinian unity of ranks and voices at this particular time at home and abroad.

The committee secretary said that the Tunis meetings will discuss all alternatives as far as the peace process is concerned, including suspension and even cancelation of the negotiations if the Israelis maintain their current attitude. He affirmed that the Palestinian decision to proceed or not to proceed with the negotiations will depend on the extent of change in the Israeli position in the period preceding the committee's meeting.

Al-Surani pointed out that, in their contacts at Arab and international levels and with "the two sponsors of the peace process," the [Palestinian] executive authorities are insisting on and aiming for an Israeli commitment to withdrawal, a date to be set for the elections, and recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and their own independent state.

He said that in the event of flexibility and change in the Israeli position, the Executive Committee will not suspend the negotiations. He confirmed that, during these meetings, the committee will also discuss Arab relations and issues as well as support for the Egyptian and Arab position on Israel's nuclear weapons. He asserted that the Palestinians will never accept a peace that would fulfill all Israeli objectives and guarantee Israeli security at the expense of the security, interests, and rights of the Arab states.

'Urayqat: Speedier Peace Process To Offset Violence

TA0203175295 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew
1500 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] We asked for Palestinian Authority member Sa'ib 'Urayqat's reaction to Shim'on Peres' optimistic observations. He told us that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment and the elections in the territories should be held concurrently and now. He said that unless the interim arrangement is implemented before the end of 1995, the peace accord will be in jeopardy.

[Begin 'Urayqat recording, in English] Well, it should have been concluded about nine months ago, on 13 July. I think if they plan to delay it until the end of this year,

I'm afraid that the Gaza-Jericho cannot stand on its feet. The peace process is now like a baby half-born, it just cannot stay in no-man's land, nowhere.

And as far as negotiations are concerned, you know, the interim agreement consists of four components: the redeployment outside of (residential) areas in the West Bank; the review of laws; the transfer of authority; and the elections. These things should be done in parallel.

What other alternative do we have than the speedy implementation of the peace process? And what we mean here is that once the normal people, the normal Israelis, the normal Palestinians start seeing the real changes on the ground, the real fruits of peace that affect their very lives, we are 100-percent sure that things will change. Today the situation with Gaza-Jericho, as I told you, is a baby half-born. But if anybody thinks that the delay in the peace process and the nonimplementation of the peace process will really limit or terminate the cycle of violence and counterviolence, I would tell them: Please, think again, because you will only increase the possibilities of violence and counterviolence. [end recording]

Asked about the takeover of the Palestinian street by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Sa'ib 'Urayqat said: The peace process is the only alternative. When our people understand and taste the fruits of peace, things will change. In view of this, he said, the process must be accelerated.

UN Representative Addresses Security Council

JN0203125395 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic
1000 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The state of Palestine has called on the UN Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities in stopping Israeli violations of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the settlement activities in their lands, particularly in Jerusalem, which are taking place before the international community despite the clear stand of the United Nations and its resolutions.

Dr. Nasir al-Qudwah, Palestine's ambassador to the United Nations, spoke today at a Security Council session called to discuss the issue of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory. He said we face a unique situation in the history of our international organization and contemporary international relations. He said one member state continued a specific policy and practice for 35 years, thereby creating a specific situation on the ground, ignoring the clear and constant stand adopted by the Security Council and General Assembly.

Palestine's representative said the council's failure to impose its will in this case, compared with other cases, has allowed Israel to get this far. He called on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility and protect international and humanitarian laws and the council's resolutions in this regard, and to achieve justice and

the restoration of the Palestinian people's hopes by ending all settlement activities in the occupied territory.

Dr. al-Qudwah noted the peace process and the historic handshake at the White House when the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles and the subsequent agreements were signed. Al-Qudwah added that the minimum level of negotiations with good intentions requires that the negotiating parties refrain from creating new realities on the ground that affect the talks or undermine their results.

The representative of Palestine said any settlement activities in occupied Palestinian territory, including Palestine, blatantly violate the spirit and letter of the Declaration of Principles, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the Security Council resolutions. He added: What is needed now is a total end of all settlement activities, regardless of their kind or size.

Dr. al-Qudwah called on the Security Council to shoulder its basic responsibility in this regard, represented by fostering and protecting the peace process, as happened with Resolution 904 in 1994 when the Security Council saved the peace process and turned it back to the right path.

The representative of the state of Palestine also noted the Israeli acts and practices which are not in harmony with the peace process and which threaten it, particularly the repeated closure and procrastination in implementing the agreements concluded by the two parties. He said serious procrastination can be seen in the implementation of the second part of the Declaration of Principles, which was due more than seven months ago, particularly with regard to the relocation of the Israeli Army outside populated areas and the holding of the Palestinian elections.

Dr. al-Qudwah said the peace process is passing through a delicate phase, and is, in fact, in a real crisis. What is needed, he added, is to save this process by full adherence to the commitments of the parties. He said the Palestinians adhere to peace and to the ongoing process. He said: We would like to believe this is also the stand of the Israeli party, which must stop all settlement activities.

Qaddumi Reviews Visit to Iraq, Arab Tour

JN0203130095 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
1 Mar 95 p 40

["Exclusive" interview with Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, by Ahmad 'Abd-al-Majid in Baghdad; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] ['Abd-al-Majid] Will Baghdad be the last leg [of your tour]?

[Qaddumi] I will visit other Arab countries to explain to their leaders the developments of the peace process and in the occupied Palestinian territories after the events that took place. Following these events, Israel refused to

implement the Oslo accords, despite the negotiations which the brothers in the occupied territories held with the Israelis.

My tour also aims to search for alternatives which will preserve the peace process without harming the Palestinian rights or political constants.

[Abd-al-Majid] What countries will be included in your Arab tour?

[Qaddumi] The tour will include many countries in north Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.

[Abd-al-Majid] Before you left Tunis, you said there will be a phase in which the Palestinians need to be prepared, and that such a phase will be a surprise. What is the nature of such a phase?

[Qaddumi] After brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] briefed us on the deadlocked negotiations, we discussed with him the need to hold a PLO Executive Committee meeting as well as consultations with the Palestinian and Arab parties in order to end the impasse of the peace process as a result of the intransigent Israeli position which aims at keeping the West Bank, not withdrawing from it, and not holding elections in it.

This situation requires taking decisive positions and searching for alternatives, so we can negotiate without making concessions. The Oslo accords and the way Israel implemented them have shown that they will not yield a just peace and that they disavow the Palestinian people's national rights to self-determination, to establishing an independent state, and to repatriating the Palestinian refugees. [passage omitted]

[Abd-al-Majid] How did you find Baghdad's response to your mission?

[Qaddumi] Baghdad supports clearing the Arab atmosphere and achieving Arab reconciliation. I frequently listened to the official [Iraqi] statements read out during the Arab foreign ministers meetings or the Islamic conferences or through the official Iraqi positions and statements. No doubt, these positions show that fraternal Iraq wants to consolidate the Arab approach adopted by Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Isamat 'Abd-al-Majid. [passage omitted]

'Arafat Meets Released Islamic Jihad Journalist

TA0203192595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
1900 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat met with journalist 'Ala' al-Saftawi in Gaza today, hours

after the Islamic Jihad activist was released from prison by the Palestinian Police. 'Arafat and al-Saftawi refused to disclose the contents of their meeting. Our correspondent Dani Zaquen reports that al-Saftawi, editor of AL-ISTIQLAL, was detained about two weeks ago and his newspaper was closed down.

Several dozen relatives of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] detainees demonstrated outside Gaza's main prison demanding the release of their loved ones.

Hamas Leader Calls On PA To Stop Preventing Attacks

TA0203175195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
1600 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Ahmad Bahr, a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leader in the Gaza Strip, has called for further attacks against what he called the Zionist enemy. The shaykh indirectly warned the Palestinian Authority not to prevent the struggle against Israel and said those who want to stop the struggle aid the Zionist occupation. He made the remarks in an address to some 2,000 worshippers in Gaza.

Hamas Delegation Visits Qatar, Meets Crown Prince

TA0203180395 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic
2 Mar 95 p 6

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, QUDS PRESS—A responsible source in Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] has said that a Hamas delegation made up of two senior officials has ended a one-week visit to the State of Qatar.

The source told QUDS PRESS that the delegation, comprised of Khalid Mash'al, member of the Hamas Political Bureau, and Muhammad Nazzal, Hamas' representative in Jordan, held a meeting with Qatar's Crown Prince and Minister of Defense Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Shaykh Khalid Bin-Hamad Al Thani, and other officials in the Government of Qatar.

The source stressed that the discussions dealt with the general situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, the deteriorating economic situation of Palestinian residents as a result of the ongoing Israeli siege of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Israel's continued detention of more than 6,000 prisoners, including Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, the spiritual leader of Hamas.

Algeria

Dembri: '95 'Deadline' for Presidential Election

LD0203213795 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1800 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Announcer] As you heard in our headlines, Mohamed Salah Dembri, our minister of foreign affairs, has just concluded a 24-hour visit to Brussels during which he met with three members of the government, members of the Belgian parliament, and members of the European parliament, including its president.

Mr. Dembri granted an exclusive interview to our Brussels correspondent, Arezki Amokrane, during which he spoke about his various meetings, first and foremost those concerning cooperation between Algeria and Belgium which is of the greatest importance to both countries. [passage omitted]

One topic of his talks with the Belgian cabinet members was the quality of the management of the period of transition by the Algerian authorities and their general attitude. According to Mr. Dembri his Belgian interlocutors showed more than understanding—they showed satisfaction.

[Begin Dembri recording] I think they are very happy with the significant progress already achieved in our country, and especially with everything connected with the rational and methodical attempts to build a national consensus, even though it might be thought—from the standpoint, of course, of observers ...[words interrupted by 18-second burst of music; followed by announcement in English: "Radio Algiers International, it's about 20 minutes past the hour"; then 3 seconds music] ...when he established the result of those early consultations. Those efforts are highly regarded abroad and, when all is said and done, serve to prove that pluralist democracy is being built in Algeria from day to day, patiently but determinedly, and that we are endeavoring to become a part of the universal whole while preserving the constituent elements of our national identity.

It now remains for us—since there may exist differing political views among us—to call on those upon whom sovereignty solely rests, that is to say, the people, and in all the countries of this world this is something that will be fully understood, everyone realizes that the transition cannot go on indefinitely, and that the change to constitutional legitimacy is absolutely essential, and that the current year of 1995 is, as far as a presidential election is concerned, a deadline that must not be put back nor changed. This is a fundamental given. It is therefore important that, back home, everyone in politics and in the civil society should pull together for the success of this consensual approach. [end recording]

[Announcer] In the Belgian capital Mr. Dembri also had talks with the president of the European parliament with

whom he discussed the various possible types of partnership between Algeria and the EU countries. The forthcoming agreement between Algeria and the IMF has received very clear support from the EU due to the depth of the economic reforms undertaken in Algeria in parallel with the henceforth irreversible progression toward popular legitimacy.

[Begin Dembri recording] [passage omitted] The Europeans are fully satisfied that Algeria has successfully brought off the economic stabilization program. I regard this as a major achievement in the context of the transitional program, and it is also proof of the solidity of the country's institutions, transitional though they may be. This is a given. European support has been agreed. We have also secured understanding of the current process, with the participation of the highest possible number of people, toward a presidential election before the end of 1995. Everyone welcomes the fact that we have already given our solemn pledge that the election will proceed in a context of transparency, sincerity, and fidelity to the verdict of the ballot box, since the head of state himself has announced that international observers will be called on to monitor the polls. [end recording]

Comments on Results of Belgium Visit

LD0203203395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Mohamed Salah Dembri concluded his visit to the Belgian capital Brussels. There, he held a series of meetings and discussions with a number of political leaders in Belgium and EU officials.

At the end of the two-day visit, the foreign affairs minister confirmed that Belgium and the EU expressed their readiness to provide complete and comprehensive support for Algeria. He added that this visit, which came within the framework of periodic consultations, was to evaluate the overall results of the bilateral cooperation and exchange information on the situation in Algeria and international issues of mutual interest. The visit made it possible for the two sides to draw up a program for a series of meetings in the near future and put the final touches on the measures that would develop and promote bilateral cooperation at political and economic levels.

On the economic side, Mr. Dembri explained that a Belgian ministerial delegation will visit our country during April. Also a delegation of Algerian businessmen will make a similar visit to Brussels in the same month.

Mr. Mohamed Salah Dembri pointed out that the talks he had with the EU and Belgian officials centered mostly on the support potentials that would be guaranteed for Algeria by the EU as soon as Algeria begins implementation of the facilities agreement with the International Monetary Fund.

On the other hand he confirmed that the EU was satisfied with the results of the economic program that is being implemented in Algeria.

On the Algerian-Belgian cooperation, our foreign minister confirmed that the discussions basically centered on the reviving and activating well over 30 projects and discussing new projects that concern small and intermediate organizations—agriculture, energy, chemistry, pharmaceuticals, building and construction, vocational training, and transport.

Envoy: Tourists to Turkey Not Working With Terrorists

NC0303121495 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1030 GMT
3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ankara, 3 Mar (MENA)—Algeria's Ambassador in Turkey Rachid Haddad [name as received] has expressed his country's dissatisfaction with Turkish newspaper reports that Algerian tourists cooperate with Turkish terrorist organizations.

Ambassador Haddad told a MENA correspondent today that newspaper reports that Algerian tourists go to Turkey, stay there, and cooperate with terrorist organizations before returning to Algeria are untrue.

He attributed the increase in Algerian tourists to Turkey—last year 20,000, up on 2,000 the previous year—to the operation of direct flights between Turkey and Algeria. Before, he said, Algerian tourists had to fly to Bulgaria first and then take the land route to Turkey because there were no direct flights between Turkey and Algeria.

Egypt

Islamic Militant Group Threatens United States

NC0303070895 Paris AFP in English 2354 GMT
2 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 3 (AFP)—Egypt's main Islamic militant group threatened revenge attacks against the United States Thursday [2 March], accusing it of defiling symbols of Islam.

"American effrontery in Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon and Libya" and US hostility toward "the symbols of Islam and its ulemas can be stopped only by mujahidin who want to die as martyrs for the love of God," the clandestine al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah said in a statement. Ulemas are scholars of Muslim religion and law.

The group took issue with the United States for jailing its leader, Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, accused of masterminding an attack on the World Trade Center in New York in February 1993 that left six dead and hundreds wounded.

The communique, issued to mark the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, contained the group's

harshest language yet towards the United States. Normally the organization simply denounces U.S. support for the Egyptian Government, which the al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah has been fighting for three years.

It is particularly active in the southern Egyptian province of al-Minya.

Envoy Discusses Israeli Settlements at UN

NC2802214595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1920 GMT
28 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 28 Feb (MENA)—Ambassador Nabil al-'Arabi [Egypt's representative at the United Nations] has stressed that Israel's position in the negotiations with the Palestinians regarding the deployment of the Israeli forces outside the occupied Arab cities to help hold Palestinian elections in a free atmosphere still lacks the flexibility needed to reach an agreement ensuring Israel's fulfillment of its obligations.

In a statement to a meeting of the UN Security Council today to discuss Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, al-'Arabi said that Israel exacerbated the problems of the peace process by its continued disregard for its responsibilities as an occupation force. These responsibilities impose restrictions and duties in accordance with the rules of international law, the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1949 on protection of civilians in war time, and the commitments that the Security Council had decisively and categorically determined, and which Israel itself said it would respect.

He noted that the three documents categorically prohibit Israeli settlement activity in the occupied territories because it is a means for changing the legal, political, and demographic nature of those territories.

In Egypt's statement to the Security Council today, Ambassador Nabil al-'Arabi pointed out that in its 49th clause, the Fourth Geneva Convention prevents an occupation force from deporting or transferring its civilian population to the lands under occupation. Security Council Resolution 465 of 1980 also stressed that Israel's policy and acts to settle part of its population and new immigrants in the occupied territories constitute a grave violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in war time, and represent a new obstacle to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Al-'Arabi noted that the resolution particularly called on Israel to stop building and planning settlements in the Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem.

The same resolution said that the Security Council strongly denounces Israel's continuation of and insistence on pursuing these policies and practices, and calls on the Israeli people and government to stop these measures and to dismantle the existing settlements.

Ambassador al-'Arabi explained that in the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles, Israel agreed that the issues of settlements, Jerusalem, border, and refugees would be discussed at the negotiations for the final status. This means that the two sides committed themselves not to make any changes that may prejudice the outcome of those upcoming negotiations. This commitment is consistent with Israel's responsibility as an occupation force. It will remain valid as long as the occupation continues, and it cannot be nullified by unilateral will.

Ambassador al-'Arabi stressed that Israel's settlement policy is one of the battles seeking to demolish the peace process, and it gives skeptics on the outcome of this process a new element of support.

He said the enemies of peace on the Israeli side are using the settlement issue to undermine every chance for the success of the current peace talks.

He added: To confront the impasse in the peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians, and in the absence of a decisive and full Israeli commitment to stop all settlement activity in all occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, it became necessary to resort to the Security Council. Ensuring respect for the Geneva Conventions is a common international responsibility, and all states participating in these conventions are responsible for checking their implementation, as the first common article in all the four conventions stipulate.

Responding to Israel's attempts to prevent a discussion [by the Security Council] of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories using the excuse that the Palestinians and the Israelis signed a Declaration of Principles, Egypt's UN representative said the international community is unanimous that certain basic rules cannot be violated. These include the Fourth Geneva Convention. According to these rules, no side can use a bilateral agreement as an excuse and say that this agreement denies the world community the right to shoulder its original responsibility of ensuring the implementation of those rules.

Al-'Arabi called on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility and take the necessary measures to impose respect for international conventions and pursue the implementation of its relevant resolutions.

He said the Security Council's assumption of this responsibility dictates that it send a clear and unequivocal message to Israel: that the continuation of the current settlement policy constitutes a grave legal violation and an abortion of the current peace negotiations, and that the government of Israel must respect its international obligations and immediately stop all forms of settlement building, no matter under which name.

Al-'Arabi said Egypt made big efforts so that the current crisis may not lead to the collapse of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. From this premise, he said, Cairo

called for the quadripartite summit, which was held on 2 February, and participated in the four-way foreign ministers meeting in Washington on 12 February.

He said that out of concern for the peace process, Egypt supported the call for a Security Council meeting to discuss a halt to the Israeli settlement activity.

Concluding his statement, Egypt's UN representative said Israel is called upon, more than ever before, to respect its obligations, as an occupying authority, toward the occupied territories and toward the Palestinians, who are still suffering under occupation. He said Israel's responsibility does not stop at respecting the rules and resolutions of international law and world conventions, but goes beyond that to avoiding the collapse of the peace process and saving it from imminent danger.

He warned that the optimism and the hope that knocked at the door of the region after the famous handshake at the doorsteps of the White House have begun to disappear gradually before our very eyes because of the deadlock in the negotiations. He said: We are now moving in a vicious circle of frustration that leads to extremism and violence.

He stressed the need to break this tragic cycle, saying that no attempt can succeed as long as past practices of military occupation continue to leak into the present.

Al-'Arabi called on the Security Council to take a decisive position by stressing the need for all concerned parties to respect and fully implement international commitments. He said the solution lies not in bombastic and beautiful words but in deeds.

He expressed Egypt's hope that the Security Council will succeed in warning against this danger and working to avoid it.

The Security Council began discussing the Israeli settlement policy at noon today at the request of the Arab group.

Some 26 representatives are expected to address the Council over two sessions, one in the morning and the other in the evening. Diplomats do not expect a resolution to be issued at the end of the debate.

Security Council Assailed for Not Denouncing Israel

*NC0303084895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0602 GMT
3 Mar 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 3 Mar (MENA)—AL-AKHBAR criticizes the [UN] Security Council for its recent refusal to issue a resolution denouncing Israel's building of Jewish settlements in the occupied Arab territories.

In its editorial today, it says the Security Council has forgotten that it issued its famous Resolution 242 in November 1967 calling for the Israeli forces' withdrawal

from all territories they occupied in the June [1967] war, following it up with Resolution 338 asserting this principle.

Concluding its editorial, the paper says that when the Security Council loses its memory and adopts positions contradicting resolutions that set out extremely important legal principles, the Council loses its good standing and prestige, which are its only capital.

Labor Party Supports Government Stand on NPT
NC0203121595 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 21 Feb 95
p 1

[Statement by the Labor Party; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Labor Party is following up the debate on Israeli nuclear weapons and it is certain that the Israeli nuclear program and the presence of Israeli weapons represent a danger to Egypt's national security, which is an indivisible part of pan-Arab security.

The party closely observes the Egyptian stand on this issue as well as the stands of other parties. In this respect, the party underlines its support for the Egyptian stand, demanding that Israel sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] and open the Israeli nuclear program to international inspection and control. The party also demands the elimination of the Israeli nuclear arsenal.

We also support the official stand of not abiding by the NPT as long as all the countries of the region do abide by it and of not extending it for an unlimited period of time.

In this respect, we support the Arab League's call for a united Arab stand on the extension of the NPT and for formulating a treaty on weapons of mass destruction. The party calls on the Arab countries to take a firm stand on this issue.

The party warns of the Israeli maneuvers that are backed by some countries. It calls for rejecting any solution that does not include the immediate and unconditional signing of the NPT and its ratification before April 1995. It also calls for subjecting the Israeli nuclear program to international control and for a pledge to check the nuclear arsenal in accordance with a definite timetable.

We also call on the Egyptian and Arab authorities to take all the necessary defensive measures to ensure the region against the dangers of nuclear weapons by providing individual and collective resources for this purpose.

Al-Baz Statement on Nuclear Treaty Assailed
NC0203085295 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 26 Feb 95
p 1

[Article by Chief Editor Jamal Badawi: "Have we Started the Plan To Back Down Before Israel?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It seems from a statement by Dr. Usamah al-Baz at Alexandria University that the Egyptian Government has started backing down on its firm position regarding signing the Nuclear Nonproliferation

Treaty. According to AKHBAR AL-YAWM yesterday, al-Baz said that if Israel refuses to sign the Treaty, the Egyptian position will not be 'emotional,' but will be decided in light of the promises Israel will offer and whether it is ready to submit its nuclear installations to international inspection. The Egyptian position will not be characterized by inaction.

We know the importance of al-Baz's position: He is one of the cooks in Egypt's decisionmaking kitchen. His statements should not be viewed as personal wishes or private analyses. We need to study the dangers these statements pose for morale, which was pumped up immensely with the just and steadfast Egyptian position. Then came al-Baz's statement to deflate it.

Without entering into a war of words regarding the new Egyptian position, I say that the issue can be abridged in a simple and uncomplicated stance. This stance is: If Israel will not sign the Treaty and if the civilized world accepts a pledge from it to allow inspection of nuclear installations in 20, 40, or 70 years, then why do we not do the same? We could refuse to sign and promise to accept inspection of our nuclear installations after a period set by Israel.

Is this not the logic of justice and equality, o you people who call for peace and civilization?

My proposal means that nobody is better than anybody else. There is no privileged country in the region, and we should do exactly what Israel does. If it signs the agreement in the morning, then we will sign it in the evening. If it puts off signing the agreement for 70 years, then we will put off signing the agreement 71 years. If it refuses to sign, then we will also refuse to sign. But if anything else happens, then you can kiss Egypt goodbye; you can kiss peace a thousand goodbyes. The reaction in the Egyptian street will be emotional, not negative, as the government thinks, because the Egyptian street will not accept insults. The Egyptian people will not accept having their government abandon its right and responsibility to protect its subjects against an atomic danger.

The Egyptian street is neither dead nor slumbering in honey, as the government thinks it is. The Egyptian street is seething with rage inside and smoldering under the ashes. It is bearing the burdens of poverty, inflation, and terrorism to preserve social stability. If the government signs the Treaty and backs down before Israel, this will represent defeat. It will be the straw that breaks the camel's back and the flame that sparks national feeling. It will arouse national feelings and activate the factors of repression and revenge in Egyptians.

My dear al-Baz, there is no basis for comparison between the Treaty and the Tabá problem. There is no need for such comparison unless the government wants to mislead the people and create a smokescreen for the disgraceful withdrawal before Israel. With regard to the Tabá issue, the two parties accepted the arbitration and its results before the International Court of Justice. As

for our current problem, Israel is defying the whole world and refusing to submit its nuclear installations for inspection now or in future, alleging that it faces a danger from Iran. These are allegations, as is no secret to you. They cannot even convince a child that Israel is serious about peace, that it wants to coexist on an equal footing with its Arab neighbors, and that it accepts anything less than control and hegemony under the umbrella of the atomic bombs it has.

If our international legal experts study the Israeli promise, then should we not ask their Israeli counterparts to study an Egyptian promise in the same words? Or are we still living in the age of occupation and foreign control?

Diplomat on New York NPT Meeting, Extension Prospects

NC0303100595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0850 GMT
3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] London, 3 Mar (MENA)—Egypt's Ambassador in Britain Dr. Muhammad Shakir expects the New York conference, due to be held in April to renew the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT], to result in an NPT extension for a specific or limited period, not in indefinite extension as the major nuclear countries, namely the United States, wish.

In an interview with the London-based AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT newspaper, the Egyptian ambassador, a world expert in disarmament, said the conference, which will be attended by some 171 countries organizing the treaty, will face three options according to the text of the treaty itself, whose 25-year term is expiring. The treaty stipulates that it be extended indefinitely, or extended to a limited time or to 10-15 years but leaving the door open to renewal for a further period.

Dr. Shakir noted that the draft regional treaty to eliminate mass-destruction weapons from the Middle East being devised by the Arab League does not contradict the international treaty. Rather, he said, it enhances it, because it completely frees the region of nuclear weapons, even banning their passage through it.

Answering a question on whether amending the treaty will be raised at the upcoming New York conference, he said this is not on the agenda of the conference, which is to discuss the NPT extension and review its application over the last 25 years. But, he added, the conference might demand an amendment, which is an independent process. Under the NPT articles, an amendment must be prepared and distributed to the members and agreed by a majority. Then all member states in the International Atomic Energy Agency board of directors should approve it. Afterward, all member states of the Geneva Disarmament Convention should approve it. In light of these measures, amendment seems impossible and this is one of the treaty's shortcomings.

Concluding his interview, Ambassador Shakir noted that numerous countries have the ability to produce nuclear weapons quickly or fairly quickly and that there are other countries that can be nuclear powers but have decided not to be, such as Australia, Sweden, and Canada.

U.S. Policy on Asset Freeze, Jerusalem Viewed

NC0203222295 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 21 Feb 95
p 9

[Article by Fahmi Huwaydi: "Some Sharp-Ended Facts"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sometimes we read the news as we wish it to be, not as it really is. As a result, we make the mistake of misinterpretation, which turns our lives into a series of surprises and shocks. The following are three episodes that have cropped up recently and that fit into this category we are cautioning against.

1. The Arab press, citing U.S. sources, has reported that the choice of Martin Indyk as U.S. ambassador to Israel "reflects Washington's desire to activate the peace process," since he "is an expert in the intricacies of the Arab-Israeli relations and has a wide awareness of the region's circumstances." Some Arab diplomats have spoken in the same vein. The PLO Washington representative, in remarks published in THE WASHINGTON POST, has commended Indyk's nomination as someone with whom we can work, adding that if his commitment to Israel is coupled by a true vision, it could help the peace process.

An article written by William Harrop, former U.S. ambassador to Israel, in the 2 February issue of THE WASHINGTON POST has caught my attention. The former ambassador expressed a totally different opinion and viewed President Clinton's choice of Indyk as a "grave mistake that will harm the Jewish community, Israel, the United States, and the peace process." He noted that it is wrong to give the job to someone who is "so much associated with Israel."

I went back to Indyk's file, only to find that Ambassador Harrop was extremely courteous and polite in his remarks about Indyk and to his objection to him being selected as ambassador to Tel Aviv in particular. As for the Arab diplomats who praised the nomination, I do not know how to describe their stance. I only say that they either are not aware of the truth or they are ignoring it, and either way they are pushing us to the brink of misinterpretation.

The man is Jewish, the first Jew ever to be chosen as a U.S. ambassador to Israel since its establishment. He is originally an Australian who acquired U.S. nationality in March 1993. Indyk, 44, has never in his life assumed a diplomatic position. [passage omitted]

If so, remarks by some that the new ambassador will activate the peace process is nothing more than wishful thinking. The fact is that the U.S. Administration has

chosen one of Israel's men as its ambassador in Tel Aviv. This does not fall within the context of serving the peace process as much as it is an explicit and impudent step to tune the peace process according to the Israeli tempo alone. The truth is that the decision constitutes a mobilization against the Arab right and a bias toward Israel's falsehood, a role that Martin Indyk has never ceased to play since he appeared on the public stage in Washington!

2. The second episode relates to the U.S. President's decision to freeze the assets of terrorist organizations in U.S. banks, a decision that was widely welcomed in the Arab media and treated as an important step toward containing terrorist activity. On the surface, the decision seemed to be in response to and in line with various desires in the region, but it isn't precisely so. We will not say that it equates the terrorism from which some Arab states suffer for purely domestic reasons with the Palestinian resistance, which in the final analysis is a legitimate response to Israel's terrorism. Israel's terrorism is demonstrated by its continued occupation, settlement expansion, and procrastination in honoring its obligations under the Oslo Agreement itself, chief among them being the withdrawal of the Israeli Army from the West Bank and holding local elections. We will not discuss the amount of money or assets owned by these organizations, or individuals, in U.S. banks. We will only repeat what the U.S. press has published, that these assets are extremely modest. In fact, they are too modest to warrant a U.S. decision at the presidential level.

Why was the decision made then? Our answer is that it is not meant to contain or frustrate the terrorist activity in the Arab states but to serve Israel's interests primarily. It is meant to deal a blow to the entire Palestinian activity directed toward the occupied territories on one hand and on the other hand to besiege the Arab and Islamic activity in the United States, which upsets the Zionist "lobby" there. Part of the Palestinian activity in the United States is political, but most of it is social and humanitarian work to care for the poor and orphans and support cultural and charity societies in Palestine. The Arab and Islamic activity in America has increased in recent years, not only because of the rise of the Islamic phenomenon, but also because the Muslim immigrants have realized the high risks involving the third generation of their family members, which threaten their Arab and religious affiliation. In addition, everybody has started to come out in defense of their rights as U.S. citizens. This awakening has aroused the concerns of the dominant Zionist "lobby," which realizes that Muslims in the United States are more than Jews and that should Muslims use their electoral weight, they would inevitably influence U.S. political decisions, even if at a later stage.

The Jewish response was to brand everybody a "terrorist." The attempt to blow up the World Trade Center in New York, the secrets of which are yet to unravel, came as a bonus for them. They used the incident to a great extent in their campaign, and the television documentary "Jihad in America" was the most evident result.

Because there are no secrets in America, it transpired that the Jewish plan had been studied by the "Jewish-American committee," which released it in a document dated December 1994. (Notice that the U.S. President's decision was issued on 24 January 1995). The document, entitled "A Policy and a Plan of Action on International Terrorism," stated that there are several fund raisers for and propagandists of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Hizballah, and extremist Islamic groups who must be discouraged and their activity stopped as much as the law would permit." Toward that end, the committee's plan called for the need to "urge the U.S. President to issue a special national security directive drafting a comprehensive strategy against terrorism, ensuring that the government agencies respond to it by highlighting the danger of terrorism, enlightening and informing the U.S. public through the media about the overall danger of the organizational Islamic extremism, and keeping terrorism at the center stage of the public's attention so that this danger may not last."

Note that the attention is being focused only on a part of the fund-raising process that goes to support the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance. The President did not refer to the portion of the fund that goes to charitable activities and cultural purposes, let alone the funds that are being raised in the United States amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars for building Jewish settlements on the usurped and confiscated Palestinian land. These practices are commendable and desired, while the funds raised for the Palestinians are considered acts of terrorism and a mark of disgrace.

It's an irony of fate that the Arabs and American Muslims had asked the U.S. Administration to stop the Jewish terrorist groups' activities in the United States in the wake of the massacre that Goldstein committed in the Ibrahimi Mosque. Goldstein was an American citizen affiliated with the U.S.-based extremist Kahane groups. At that time, the Arab and Islamic organizations had called for liquidating the U.S.-based centers of these extremist groups, including Kahane (Jewish Defense League) and Kach, which have training and fund-raising bases in the United States. [passage omitted]

3. Finally, there is that story about the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the transfer of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Our papers often talked about the Arab efforts to prevent the transfer of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. Islamic delegations held seminars for the purpose. At last, we felt happy after the statements of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in which he said that the United States does not want to make a decision now over this sensitive issue. Therefore, taking such a step now is bound to torpedo the peace process, he added.

Undoubtedly, those efforts and that speech are commensurate with our wishes. But what is really happening runs counter to the good impression left by the words. The truth was revealed in an article published by Michael

Saba, an Arab-American research professor, in the newspaper AL-HAYAH on 1 February. Saba drew our attention to the fact that the United States and Israel signed a suspect document about Jerusalem on 19 January 1989, on the last day of President Reagan's term. The signing ceremony took place calmly and far from the spotlights. The document serves as an important change in the U.S. historic stance on the issue of Jerusalem.

The document was named "The Land Lease-Purchase Agreement." It was concluded in implementation of a congressional decision in 1988 to purchase two plots of land in Jerusalem or on the West Bank for the construction of two diplomatic buildings. It is up to the U.S. President to decide when the two buildings will be completed and which one should be the U.S. Embassy premises.

According to the 1989 agreement, the United States obtained a location in West Jerusalem. This location was part of the city before 1947 and this is considered by the United Nations as occupied land by Israel. Moreover, prior to the signing of the agreement, the United States considered the entire city of Jerusalem, including West Jerusalem, a separate entity of Israel. The Islamic awqaf (endowment) administration reiterates that the land leased by the U.S. Government belongs to the endowment land and, therefore, Israel has no right to sell it.

Professor Saba cited Dr. Francis Boyl from Illinois University and Dr. Thomas Malison from Washington University [names as published], two of the most prominent experts in the U.S. international law, as saying that the signing of the agreement means an implicit recognition of Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem. According to the two experts, the international law clearly prohibits the purchase or lease of any land from an occupation force.

It is evident that the United States has been endeavoring to implement the project since 1989 and has been shrouding the entire operation with secrecy. The United States refused to answer questions about the issue. The agreement contains a provision that stipulates that the diplomatic utilities will be ready by July 1996. According to professor Saba, the date was not set haphazardly because it is linked to several expected events during next year. These events include:

A. The year 1996 will be the year of the U.S. presidential elections. Consequently, the U.S. President will have to adopt a stand on the transfer of the embassy to Jerusalem after the completion of the buildings according to the amendment of 1989. This issue will be used by the presidential candidates who must support the transfer to gain votes and Jewish funds during the elections.

B. Israeli elections will also be held during the same year. The issue of Jerusalem and its final status will be a crucial issue in the elections. Then everyone will compete to gain U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

C. Israel will launch huge celebrations during 1996 on the occasion of what it calls the 3,000th anniversary of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. This date was in fact set haphazardly, but the Israelis cling to it and to its symbolic values.

D. The 1993 Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles stipulates that the final status of the West Bank and Jerusalem should be determined two years after the implementation of the self-rule in Gaza and Jericho. But Israel delayed the implementation until May 1994. This means that the talks will begin before mid-1996 when the other aspects of the status of Jerusalem would have been determined.

These are some aspects of the truth, but what is hidden might be much bigger.

'Source' Rejects al-Bashir's Conditions To Improve Ties

JN0303085295 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
28 Feb 95 p 6

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo—AL-HAYAH—A responsible Egyptian source has described the statements made by Sudanese President Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir the day before yesterday—in which he linked the improvement of Sudanese-Egyptian relations with stopping Sudanese opposition activities in Egypt and the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Hala'ib—as a reflection of the contradictions in the declared Sudanese policy vis-a-vis the relationship with Egypt.

The Egyptian source expressed surprise at al-Bashir's statement in which he said that the Egyptians should not expect a breakthrough in relations as long as the Sudanese opposition is based in Cairo and Egyptian forces are stationed in Hala'ib. The source said: Our experiment does not make us expect any improvement, not because of the reasons mentioned by President al-Bashir but because of the lack of clarity, oscillation, and contradiction in the Sudanese officials' statements. The source added: We have always called for uniting the Sudanese stand in order to know with whom we can speak.

The Egyptian source said: What increased our surprise was the fact that these conditions were announced following the message new Sudanese Foreign Minister 'Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha sent to his Egyptian counterpart 'Amr Musa last week, inviting him to visit Khartoum, and Musa's acceptance of the invitation.

The source, however, said that Cairo welcomes Sudan's support for Egypt's stand on the signing of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, its call on Israel to sign the treaty, and its call for not extending the treaty for unlimited time.

The Egyptian source noted that regardless of the existing differences with the ruling regime in Khartoum relations between the two countries are eternal and special. He said that Egypt's stand is not related to only its security,

but also to the pan-Arab security as a whole, adding that Arab support for the Egyptian stand is necessary and welcome.

Mitterrand Meets Mubarak, Ends Private Visit

NC0103144295 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 1 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak held a 45-minute round of talks with French President Francois Mitterrand in Cairo Airport's VIP lounge this afternoon. President Mitterrand had just ended a private six-day visit to Aswan.

The two presidents discussed the latest developments in the Middle East peace process, issues pertaining to the signing of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and Egyptian-French relations and ways of boosting them in various spheres.

President Mitterrand left Cairo after these talks.

Morocco

UC Party Leader Masmoudi Resigns

LD0203140995 Rabat MAP in English 1330 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Mar. 2 (MAP)—The acceptance of the Constitutional Union Party (UC - pro-governmental) to participate, along with the other parties of the "entente", in the cabinet will make the UC "lose credibility" and the union will find itself "in a difficult position vis-a-vis the public opinion which will rightly wonder about participation in the government that will be unable to set in motion a policy, in its commonly admitted meaning".

The argument was made by chief of the group Mohamed Masmoudi in a resignation letter he addressed to UC President Maati Bouabid and aired by the "2M" TV channel and run by the "AL BAYANE DAILY".

In the letter made on the morrow of the Constitution of the Moroccan Cabinet among the MP majority, Masmoudi said he has always endeavored for an alternation government with the parties of the entente to enable right wing trends "form a political government".

Bahrain**Two Protesters Reportedly Killed by Police**

NC0203174095 Paris AFP in English 1730 GMT
2 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, March 2 (AFP)—Two protesters were killed and dozens wounded on Thursday [2 April] when police broke up a protest in a Shiite Moslem village in the Gulf Arab state of Bahrain, witnesses said.

The protest took place in the village of Sitrah, southeast of the capital Manama, following prayers marking the end of the Moslem holy month of Ramadan, according to the witness contacted from Cyprus.

Yemen**Russia Welcomes Yemeni-Saudi Memorandum**

JN0203185095 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network
in Arabic 1700 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian Federation has welcomed the conclusion of the memorandum of understanding on solving the border problem between our country and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

This came in an official memorandum the brother deputy prime minister and foreign minister received from the Russian Federation's ambassador in Sanaa.

The memorandum notes that the great importance of the document is that it ascertains the two sides' eagerness to discuss the settlement of problems within the framework of dialogue and on the basis of good-neighborliness, and noninterference in each other's domestic affairs.

The memorandum praises the practical steps being taken to demarcate the borders between the two countries and the fact that an agreement was reached on the modality of arbitration—in case of a disagreement between them. The memorandum notes that all this is an important step in the right direction.

The memorandum stresses that Russia firmly supports a political solution to the border problem between the two countries as soon as possible, emphasizing that Russian President Boris Yeltsin's letters to the Yemeni and Saudi leaders are along this line. The memorandum notes the Russian Government's belief that the successive realization of the provisions contained in the memorandum will eliminate the causes of tension between the two countries and therefore, entrench peace and stability in the Arabian Peninsula.

Papers Assail Tour by U.S. Envoy Albright

AL-THAWRAH: Shows U.S. 'Bankruptcy'

JN0203205295 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic
26 Feb 95 p 2

["Standpoint" column by Diyab Nabhan: "Bankrupt U.S. Administration"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Administration's political activity to convince a number of UN Security Council member states to refrain from supporting any effort to lift the unjust blockade—a feverish activity started by U.S. UN Representative Madeleine Albright the day before yesterday—proves the bankruptcy of the U.S. Administration which has been accustomed to sticking to pretexts that are weaker than a spider's web to maintain the unjust blockade on Iraq and inflict more harm and suffering on the steadfast Iraqi people.

The U.S. Administration has lost the bargaining chips it has been using to prolong the unjust blockade. The pretexts which it used to brandish at the Security Council have fallen or been made to fall. It can no longer ensure the support of the Security Council in view of the mounting concern over the human conditions in Iraq as a result of this blockade which is considered an unprecedented human crime in terms of its ugliness, barbarism, and blatancy.

This is indeed the case now that the world has realized that Iraq has met its commitment pertaining to unjust Security Council resolutions that were issued, as is well-known, largely on behalf of the U.S. Administration. According to the provisions of UN Security Council Resolutions, particularly No. 687, the Security Council should take parallel measures to alleviate the siege on Iraq whenever Iraq makes further progress in implementing the Council's resolutions.

The situation will become more apparent when the U.S. Administration finds itself alone and isolated, using only trivial logic and acting in an aggression manner that does not help it impose what it is bent on imposing on others, contrary to UN principles, international law, and the human conventions as a whole.

Albright's tour, which does not include France and Russia because their stand on this issue has been finalized and which includes other Security Council member-states, reflects a weak political position. The tour is almost a declaration of the U.S. Administration's failure to convince the Council members—or intimidate and force them—to adopt the U.S. views without discussion. The U.S. viewpoint has always been arbitrary, replete with contradictions, lies, and hostility, especially with regard to the unjust blockade imposed on Iraq.

AL-'IRAQ Condemns 'New Aggression'

JN0303091495 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0820 GMT
3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 3 Mar (INA)—AL-'IRAQ newspaper has said the tour of Madeleine

Albright, the U.S. envoy at the United Nations, confirms the aggressive approach that seeks to further harm and destroy Iraq, having failed to make Iraq abandon its sovereignty and freedom.

In an article today, the newspaper says: Besides being a serious precedent, this tour presents an abnormal picture of how international relations are suffering in light of continued U.S. arrogance and hegemony over international decisionmaking.

The paper says Albright's tour is a new aggression against Iraq that seeks to harm the Iraqi people and tighten the noose on them, especially since five years of blockade have shown it is a futile method that will not achieve U.S. dreams and ambitions to see the revolution and its leaders collapse. The sick dreams of the United States have failed because of the powerful Iraqi response and Iraq's steadfastness and capability and its construction drive, challenge, and steadfastness.

Ekeus Reportedly Says Embargo 'May Be Lifted Very Soon'

JN0203092595 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic
25 Feb 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] UN Special Commission Chairman Rolf Ekeus has said Iraq's cooperation with the Special Commission was positive. Speaking to AL-JUMHURIYAH, Ekeus added: If cooperation continues on this level, the embargo may be lifted very soon. He said he will return to Baghdad after three weeks to pursue his talks with the Iraqi side before submitting his written report in April.

In another development, Ekeus defended himself against Swedish television accusations that he was not neutral by saying he will be positive in his next report. On the possibility of using the U.S. veto to maintain the embargo on Iraq, Ekeus said it will not be in the interest of the United States to do so.

Ekeus Briefs UN on Mission; Hamdun Comments

JN0303095595 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
28 Feb 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Raghidah Dirgham in New York]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the UN Special Commission, presented a report to the Security Council yesterday on his visit to Baghdad. Ekeus did not rule out the possibility of returning to the Iraqi capital. [passage omitted]

In a statement to AL-HAYAH, Ekeus said he told the Security Council that very positive and clear steps have been achieved in the field of chemical weapons. He added: This constitutes a tangible progress that will make us move quickly to achieve satisfactory results in this area. He said: Progress has been achieved in the field of missiles. However, Ekeus said, there are still gaps between us and Iraq in the field of biological weapons.

Iraq has not taken the political decision at the required ranking level, Ekeus said. Despite this, he said, Iraqi officials agreed on suggestions, measures, and methods to clear the biological file.

Ekeus did not rule out the possibility of returning to Baghdad, during the second half of March, to resume work aimed at closing Iraq's biological file. He said he asked the Iraqi side to resume the talks in New York, but the Iraqi officials invited him to return to Baghdad to facilitate his mission. He noted that he will return to Baghdad for practical reasons. [passage omitted]

In a statement to AL-HAYAH, Nizar Hamdun, Iraq's representative to the United Nations, said: If the UN General Secretariat or Security Council is ready to take into consideration Iraq's known reservations, we will be ready to review the issue. He added: In any case, this will not be an alternative to the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 which links Baghdad's compliance with all the requests made by the Special Commission with lifting oil sanctions on Iraq. [passage omitted]

INA: China Supports Easing Sanctions 'Gradually'

JN0303094395 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0910 GMT
3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Beijing, 3 Mar (INA)—PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen has urged the United Nations to gradually ease the blockade imposed by the Security Council on Iraq.

XINHUA cited the PRC foreign minister—during a meeting yesterday with Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf—as saying: The international community should objectively take into consideration Iraq's respect for Security Council resolutions, especially the official recognition of Kuwait in 1994. The international community should also consider seriously a gradual easing of the blockade imposed on it.

XINHUA reported that the Iraqi foreign minister, who arrived in Beijing on Wednesday [1 March], told the PRC foreign minister that Iraq is willing to continue to cooperate with the Security Council and hopes that the blockade will be eased soon.

AL-THAWRAH Says Embargo 'Dirty Game'

JN0303102895 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic
23 Feb 95 p 2

["Standpoint" column by Mu'ayyad 'Abd-al-Zahrah: "The Continuation of the Blockade...a Grave U.S. Mistake"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an editorial on 21 February, THE NEW YORK TIMES said Clinton's administration will not succeed in maintaining the embargo on Iraq indefinitely. The paper said the stand of Clinton's administration and Britain is wrong and demanded that Iraq be allowed to export its oil as stipulated in the UN Security Council resolutions. These signs carry more

than one meaning. This is especially true because THE NEW YORK TIMES is a widely read newspaper and is close to the centers of decisionmaking and to the interests of major economic figures in the United States.

It is clear that the newspaper's appeal is frank criticism of the U.S. Administration's policy in managing the crisis and shows the failure of this policy. The newspaper has repeatedly voiced such criticism. Perhaps this reiteration is a frank call to review calculations and to evaluate the results in line with existing facts, whether in terms of defending interests or resorting to Security Council resolutions and their stipulations.

In any case, this call is a sensible and realistic sign, which is beginning to crystallize—one that expresses the opinion of many U.S. economic figures and is trying hard to eliminate the network of pressures that is influencing the decisionmaking process. Moreover, the U.S. newspaper's call for a review stems from its awareness of the futility of betting on continuing the embargo. This call opens the doors for political minds and for key decisionmaking figures to seize the opportunity instead of wasting it on betting on the obvious outcome; that is, utter failure.

When such an assertion of the futility of the U.S. stand comes out, then it necessarily indicates a clear state of restlessness among U.S. companies, which were preceded by companies from many countries who went to Baghdad and held negotiations, concluded deals, signed contracts, and reached trade agreements there. The last but not least of these was a delegation representing British companies.

The world today is one of interests in which there is no policy of everlasting friendships or everlasting enmities. It is a world of mutual interests and benefits. This is what the U.S. newspaper calls for and claims. This is especially so since it realizes through figures, facts, and signs that with their firmness, steadfastness, as well as the brilliance, wisdom, and acumen of their political leadership, the Iraqis have managed to reverse the equation and to foil the embargo which aimed at subduing their willpower.

What the U.S. newspaper said yesterday and what it is saying today about the futility of wagering on keeping the embargo against our people is a frank admission in our favor that we have carried out a major part of our crossing to the other bank. This has distressed the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Those rulers have rushed to several capitals to bribe politicians, begging them to maintain the blockade against Iraq. Those rulers have gone as far as bribing the UN inspection teams that visit Iraq to fabricate cheap, ambiguous reports, as reported recently by the U.S. COLLEGIAN newspaper. We are not unfamiliar with this, and we still remember the infamous David Kay and many others who speak at the behest of the petrodollar.

The world cannot turn a blind eye forever to the major facts, primarily the fact that the unfair blockade has

turned into a dirty game that has continued for far too long and that has harmed the interests of many nations more than it has harmed the Iraqis. The Iraqi people have managed to resist the blockade and face it through their steadfastness and patience and by enduring hardships until the blockade disintegrates and collapses.

RCC Decree Prohibits Illegal Payments

JN0203201995 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic
22 Feb 95 p 2

[RCC Decree No. 16 dated 16 February]

[FBIS Translated Text] Based on the provisions of paragraph A of Article 42 of the Constitution, the Revolution Command Council [RCC] decrees the following:

1. No one will be allowed to receive money from anyone, for either apparent or hidden benefits, [fa'idah] if the amount of money exceeds the maximum allowed by law.
2. If said action results in economic sabotage, or if it is committed during war or during the embargo imposed on Iraq, violators will be punished by execution and their movable and immovable property will be confiscated.
3. At other times, and the above stiffer punishments notwithstanding, violators of part one of this decree will be punished by a prison term not exceeding 10 years and, if the offense is repeated, the punishment will be a life sentence and the violator's movable and immovable property will be confiscated.
4. A. During interrogation and trial, a defendant may not be released and his movable and immovable property, including property due to others, will be confiscated unless a definitive decision is issued on the case.
B. If convicted, a person may not be released upon the completion of his prison term unless he repays the money he received in accordance with part one of this decree or its equivalent.
5. The Interior Ministry's special court will handle cases pertaining to this decree.
6. This decree will be valid as of the date on which it is issued in the Official Gazette and until further notice.

[Signed] Saddam Husayn, RCC chairman

BABIL: U.S. Sees Country as 'Oil Reservoir'

JN0203063095 Baghdad BABIL in Arabic 26 Feb 95
p 1

[Article by 'Abd-al-Jabbar Muhsin: "What Does the United States Want?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] If the accursed Ekeus, head of the UN Special Commission, sticks to the statements he made in Baghdad and does not partially or totally change them in Bahrain or New York, any attempt to maintain the blockade imposed on our country will no longer be

justified. The question, however, is not one of logical argument. Otherwise, the blockade would not have been imposed in the first place, or at least it would have been lifted as soon as our forces withdrew from Kuwait and Iraq accepted the U.S. president's proposal to cease fire in return for the removal of the repercussions of the crisis, including the Security Council's resolutions.

The Russian foreign minister urged Iraq to officially recognize Kuwait in return for settling the crisis with the Security Council and lifting the blockade. Three Security Council member states, which have the right to use the veto, also support lifting the blockade. The rest of the member states would have supported the lifting of the blockade if they had not been subjected to irresistible pressure.

Britain's policies and positions in international organizations show it is nothing but a U.S. satellite every time a problem arises in Europe or on any other continent. I can also say that if the United States decides to lift the blockade without consulting Britain, the latter will immediately approve it. Once again, the question is not one of logical argument. It is a constant U.S. policy, at least in the foreseeable future, to starve the Iraqi people, to deprive them of medicine and spread epidemics among them, to destroy Iraq's environment, and to stop Iraq's progress and destroy what it has built through the wisdom of its leader, the efforts of its sons, and its oil revenues.

There are two reasons for this. The first is that Iraq's power is the Arabs' power, and the United States does not want to see Arab progress or power. The second is that the United States wants to keep Iraq as an oil reservoir for its future oil needs. The United States is betting on maintaining the blockade to weaken the authority of the revolution and to erect a barrier between it and the masses. Here, U.S. ignorance is epitomized by its failure to understand the experiment. The blockade was not a victory for the United States but for Iraq, which has reorganized its home, its institutions, and its production activity to remain steadfast.

The United States, which concocted and followed conspiracies and intrigues, does not know the results or the fate of the agents to whom it assigned the mission.

Food Prices Said To Increase 'Unjustifiably'

JN0203115395 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic
25 Feb 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] The prices of basic foodstuffs in Baghdad markets have unjustifiably increased by 50 percent compared with last week's prices. The price of one kilogram of rice rose to 400 dinars, sugar to 700 dinars, cooking oil to 1,000 dinars, poor quality brown flour to 250 dinars, a bottle of local tomato paste to 1,200 dinars, a can of imported tomato paste of the Tussan brand to 2,250 dinars, mutton to 1,200 dinars, and beef to 1,100 dinars.

During its tour of the Shurjah, al-Sadriyah, Jamilah, and new Baghdad markets, AL-JUMHURIYAH noted that these are arbitrary and unjustified price hikes that target a quick profit at the expense of citizens, who said they are the result of competition among traders, brokers, and sellers to raise prices. They said they had to pay what they earn in an entire month to buy a can of tomato paste. They called for an end to the price hikes and for intensified inspection. Salman Jasim, a retired citizen, said merchants and vendors exploit the delay in supplying citizens with staples according to ration cards—a delay caused by the Trade Ministry or the agent, who closes his shop before staples are supplied—and raise the prices of staples that are distributed late.

Merchants attribute the price hikes over the past few days to the rise in the foreign currency exchange rates and to the increasing number of people seeking quick profits. They added that doors are now open for all to work in trade without any controls or restrictions by the concerned quarters. Zuhayr 'Abd-al-Ghafur, chairman of the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce, called for cutting short the number of marketing links and brokers in order to reduce costs and curb price hikes. He also called for establishing more commercial, industrial, agricultural, and service corporations to guarantee sound production and marketing standards.

Trade Ministry To Liquidate Inactive Companies

JN0203095795 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic
25 Feb 95 p 4

[Report by Hiyam Ahmad]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Trade Ministry's Department for the Registration of Companies has decided to liquidate companies that have not been active for more than a year without a legitimate excuse.

An authorized source at the department told AL-JUMHURIYAH that committees comprising representatives of the sectoral quarters and departments that approve the foundation of companies will be formed to follow up the activities of joint-stock and other companies, especially new ones, in order to verify the exercise of their activities as stated in the articles of incorporation and feasibility studies.

It is noteworthy that 361 national companies have been registered from 1 January 1994 to 20 February 1995 in the sectors of trade, industry, agriculture, contracting, tourism, transportation, and services with a capital totaling 65.656 billion dinars.

Egypt's Protest of Israeli Arms 'Propagandistic'

JN0303081995 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic
26 Feb 95 p 3

["Attention" column by Hasan al-Kashif: "This Egyptian Objection"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Egyptian regime has objected to Israel's nuclear program. This objection is more a propagandistic move than a serious protest. It is clear that the purpose of this objection is to stir up a crisis for temporary and limited purposes. The Egyptian protest is not meant to create a firm and strong Egyptian, Arab, and international position to oppose Tel Aviv's exclusive possession of nuclear weapons in this region.

No serious observer can separate the various parts of any view or plan for any regime. This is because views and plans are interconnected; they either cause a person to rise or to fall and they either lead him toward salvation or create predicaments for him, according to the nature, tools, and purposes of these plans and views.

Therefore, we cannot view the Egyptian regime's objection to Israel's nuclear program in isolation from this regime's other plans and policies on the domestic, Arab, and international levels. These policies do not seek to weaken or curb Zionist militarism. Rather, they save Zionist militarism the attrition, cost, and consequences of daily confrontation with the Arabs and launch this militarism as the sole qualitative regional power.

Camp David made Egypt leave the battlefield with Tel Aviv. The October war, as al-Sadat and Mubarak said, was the last Egyptian war with Israel. This cannot weaken Tel Aviv.

By performing its political and military role in the 30-state aggression against Iraq and eagerly participating in and justifying aggression, the Egyptian regime has not served pan-Arab security. It has served U.S.-Israeli security. This is because the power of Iraq has always been for all the Arabs.

In addition, the role of the Egyptian regime in the settlement [the Arab-Israeli peace process] and its participation in contacts and in overcoming difficulties has only served the exclusive Zionist possession of conventional and atomic military power.

This is why we cannot view Egypt's official policies separately. Also, we cannot ignore Egypt's links to U.S. plans, which seek to plunder Arab resources and control their decisionmaking. Therefore, we say that those who have contributed to weakening and disuniting the Arabs do not have a right to complain about this weakness, for which they are responsible, even if they discover belatedly that complete association with the United States is not enough to assure the United States and that submitting to Tel Aviv's political conditions is not enough to assure it on the military level.

The political, economic, and military links of the Arabs' power and independent role are inseparable. In addition, creating a strong Arab position requires first a commitment to Arabism and to pan-Arab security, interests, and independence. An Arab market, rather than a Middle East market, is the solution; pan-Arab security, and not U.S. national security, is worthy of commitment; and

honest, firm commitment to the Arab League Charter and to the Collective Arab Defense Pact, and not commitment to political, security, and economic treaties with Tel Aviv and to economic and military agreements with the United States, is the solution. Without this, Egypt's objection will be nothing more than media clamor that will not bother or disturb Tel Aviv.

SAIRI Leader Views Situation in Iraq, Tour
NC0303095495 Cairo AL-AHRAM WEEKLY in English 23 Feb-1 Mar 95 p 4

[Interview with Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, leader of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq—SAIRI, in Tehran, by Du'a' al-Bay, in Cairo; date not given—faxed to AL-AHRAM WEEKLY]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Bay] What is the significance of the recent clashes?

[Al-Hakim] There have been repeated clashes between the two sides throughout the last four years, but the regime used to conceal all the details about these clashes. But this time, it was forced to reveal information because of the deterioration of the internal situation in general and within the military, especially after the recent air force attempt to topple the regime and kill Saddam [Husayn]. It was also leaked that units from the Iraqi army supported the opposition during the recent clashes.

In addition to that, Saddam lost the ethnic trump card that he was playing with. He has claimed that he is fighting the Shi'ites in the south. But recent, wide-scale oppression, that took the life of more than 20 Sunni scientists and left another 300 either lost or detained, refute these claims.

[Al-Bay] Baghdad said that the attack was part of the undeclared coordination between Iran and the US administration aimed at destabilising the internal situation in Iraq. What is your comment about this claim?

[Al-Hakim] The attacks were neither from Iraq, nor supported by Iran. Those who took part in the fighting were opposition fighters, operating inside Iraq. Iraq usually blames Iran and other countries for its internal problems. Exporting internal problems and using that as a pretext to wage war is a well-known Iraqi tactic.

However, the regime knows that ever since the Iraqi-Iranian war, the borders have been blocked by both the Iraqi and Iranian armed forces. How can a force coming from Iran penetrate these well-guarded borders into Iraq?

[Al-Bay] You said during your recent visit to Kuwait that a popular, armed uprising could overthrow Saddam Husayn in 1995. What is the basis for this claim?

[Al-Hakim] The comprehensive, popular rejection of the regime, which is reflected in the regime's ferocious oppression of the people. In addition to the deteriorating

social economic and security situation, there is an escalation of organised resistance activities inside Iraq, and evidence shows that the army is ready to launch an operation against the regime. The loss of Saddam's ethnic trump card also supports my argument.

[Al-Bay] What was the outcome of your last visits to Kuwait, Geneva and London?

[Al-Hakim] Numerous outcomes. I can reveal that all the political trends of the Iraqi opposition have planned a popular, armed uprising to topple Saddam before the end of the year. We also highlighted the need to draw a line between the regime that deserves the sanctions imposed against it and the people who are really suffering as a result of these sanctions. We pointed out that the regime is not serious in its recognition of Kuwait and it intends to repeat its aggression on the emirate, and that the Iraq people will face real danger if the regime is able to earn money from selling oil.

[Al-Bay] Is there a way out of the current difficult, internal situation in Iraq and what is the role that Arab and international parties can play?

[Al-Hakim] Knowing that the prime reason for the Iraqi people's suffering and international isolation is Saddam, then the only way out is changing the current regime. This mission must be taken by both the Iraqi people and the Arab, Islamic and international parties through implementing Security Council Resolution 688 that calls for protecting the people from the regime's oppression and genocide operations.

Saddam must also be stopped from getting money in return for selling Iraqi oil because he will spend it for his own military and political purposes.

[Al-Bay] Why did the Iraqi opposition fail to topple the regime in the last 4 years?

[Al-Hakim] We can attribute the failure to change the regime in Iraq to two main reasons: the first is the wide-scale oppression conducted by the regime against the people; the second is that the international and regional situation is against any change in Iraq, thus blocking the people and the army from contributing to such a change, except on the basis of a coup.

[Al-Bay] We heard about repeated attempts to unite the opposition ranks, but all these attempts failed. What are the reasons behind this failure?

[Al-Hakim] The different viewpoints among the Iraqi opposition parties is a normal phenomenon, bearing in mind the numerous ethnic, political and national trends in Iraqi society. But the extent of the differences are not as wide as is portrayed by the media, which is focusing on these differences for dishonest political ends.

I can affirm that the differences among the political parties are limited. They all agree on a future vision for Iraq, how to deal with the current situation and how to change it. One of the main reasons behind the partial

differences within the opposition is the interference of some host regional powers in their internal affairs. However, this remains very limited.

[Al-Bay] The Supreme Assembly was accused of trying to dominate all the other opposition parties. What is your response to this charge?

[Al-Hakim] This is not likely to happen because the assembly has always worked according to a clear policy that aims to unite the opposition ranks, giving priority to internal change rather than to authority or power.

[Al-Bay] What is the reason behind the eruption of fighting between the two main Kurdish parties in

northern Iraq? What is the role played by the Iraqi regime, Turkey, Iran and Syria in triggering off the fighting?

[Al-Hakim] For the past few years the region has been without political identity or regular economic resources. The war erupted between the two parties over the scarcity of economic resources, but the differences are minor and there are serious efforts to find a solution.

There is no doubt that the Iraqi regime has played an active role in triggering off the fighting. But according to information that I have, neither Iran, Turkey nor Syria has anything to do with the conflict. This is because any fighting in the area will open the door for changes that will harm the interests of these three states in the region.

Rabin Hopes To Resume High-Level Talks With Syria

TA0203154295 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Speaking at a ceremony in the town of Sakhnin today, the prime minister said that despite difficulties, peace can be achieved through determination and tenacity. Rabin voiced the hope that the U.S. secretary of state's visit to the region would promote the negotiations with Syria.

[Begin Rabin recording] I hope that when Secretary of State Christopher comes next week, we will be able to resume the contacts between us and Syria on a high level. I cannot say there are no difficulties. Any attempt to change traditional attitudes, to turn around a situation of hostility, enmity, wars, violence, terror—things almost as old as the world—and to attain peace is bound to be difficult. Yes, difficulties do exist. [end recording]

Peres Discusses Peace Talks, NPT Issues

TA0203144495 (Internet) Israel Information Service Gopher in English 1219 GMT 2 Mar 95

["Excerpts" from a briefing by Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres to foreign correspondents in Jerusalem on 2 March; issued by the Information Division of the Israel Foreign Ministry]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PLO

Q: (On negotiation of the interim agreement with the PLO)

FM PERES: It is taking time, and it may take more time, basically because of violence and terror, and also because the economic support didn't come as fully and as promptly as we had hoped for. But that is not the reason to think that we gave it up or we think it's a failure. Not at all.

Q: I understand that next week the four partners are starting to negotiate the return of the displaced persons from '67. I also heard on the radio this morning that in a first meeting of the Israeli side, Israel will be ready to allow the return of these people. Can you assess how many people you are talking about, and what exactly is Israel's position?

FM PERES: I think, according to the Camp David Agreement and according to the Oslo agreement that followed it and copied the same item, we have had to build a committee made up of the four parties, namely Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinians, to deal with the matter of the displaced persons. The figures and the numbers are disputed, controversial. I think, really, in order to handle this issue, we have to have more precise material, because the differences are not 3% more or 3% less, but three times as much or one-third of it, and I'm

not going to guess. I think the first thing that we shall have to do is to find out the correct facts, and then we shall be able to think how to handle the situation.

Q: I understand that you asked the Germans to help build dams on the Yarmuk River. Can you confirm that there might be some problem with Syria which owns the sources of the water, and that there might be problems with the Palestinians in Jericho who obviously would to build some pipelines of water?

FM PERES: I don't think so. I don't think that we are going to change in any way the division of water between Syria, Jordan and ourselves. I do not see any connection to the Palestinians. I think it is really trying to catch the surplus winter waters to save it for the summer. If at all, it is an intervention in the seasons, not in the countries.

Q: Is there anything more Israel could do to get the peace process with the Palestinians moving? The Palestinians obviously don't believe in the peace process any more—the closure, the settlements are being built up, no release of prisoners. Is there anything else Israel could do to restore the belief of the Palestinians in the peace process?

FM PERES: We have also to restore the belief of the Israelis, not only the Palestinians. We have released 5,000 prisoners. Some of them returned to the old business of terror. The closure came in the wake of several bombings, and we now have opened a little bit the closure. We have to guarantee the security of our people. As to the settlements, the complaints are totally unfounded. This government did not permit the addition of a single new settlement. If there is building going on in the existing settlements, it's true all over the West Bank, in the Arab settlements too. You cannot stop life. If there are more children, you build a kindergarten. People need services. If a couple is getting married, they need a home. We cannot paralyze life.

Q: You said you are sure that the interim agreement with the Palestinians will be implemented. Do you have any idea if it will be done before the elections in 1996?

FM PERES: It will be done before the elections. We would like to see the Palestinian elections held a year before the Israeli elections. Our greatest hope is that the Palestinians society will go democratic. It's not just a part of our negotiations, it's also part of our wish. Because, all told, if you ask me what is the best guarantee against nuclear proliferation, against weapons, against war, I will say 'democracy'. History shows that never did two democracies go to war. We don't make it as a condition, but clearly, if the Palestinian society will go democratic, it will be an important message to our own people. We wish them, really, a full democratic society.

Q: How will the peace process get moving? Right now it seems stuck in the mud. What can we do about the redeployment, about the elections?

FM PERES: We are doing what we should. We are negotiating quietly. The negotiations are going on all the time, they didn't stop. When the time will come to make them public, we shall do it.

Q: Can you imagine the time when there will be no more Israelis in Gaza and the West Bank, and the Palestinians will live on their land next to Israel?

FM PERES: Why should it be? The problem of the Israelis being there is a problem of the relations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Under different relations, this doesn't pose a problem at all. There are 1.3 million Palestinians on the West Bank; there are 130,000 Israelis—10 percent. Why can't they live together? What's wrong? If we shall not change the relations, we don't have a solution. We shall change the relations, we don't have a problem. There is a 17 percent Arab minority in Israel—no problem whatsoever. There is a 10 percent Jewish minority—why should it be a problem?

Q: Security being the overriding issue in this peace process, I've been trying to understand how the Israeli government measures the security or the sense of security of the Israeli people, and it seems to me that there are different factors here. One would be the passage of time without any major attacks, the other would be measures that have been taken by the Palestinian Authority, and the last one would be measures that have not been taken by the Palestinian Authority. Could you comment on that?

FM PERES: The Palestinians have begun to understand that without them taking measures, nothing will happen. The time was really necessary for them to learn that they cannot go on without doing anything. Now they have begun and we hope they will continue, and if they will continue in a convincing and visible way, then we shall be satisfied. We don't ask them for 100 percent success. What we are asking and calling for is for a full-fledged attempt to stop it, to preempt it, to arrest the terrorists. Lately they took some measures, including the establishment of a security course. Had they done it earlier, they would have saved time. They are still waiting for the end of the Ramadan to put the accused people on trial. We have to judge by real events on the ground, to see if the minimum which is necessary was done. We didn't do it suddenly. It was after a chain of acts of terror which were extremely costly to us—in human terms, in political terms.

Q: If this quiet situation in terrorism continues in Israel, do you think that the famous redeployment could be realized before summer?

FM PERES: We are negotiating about redeployment, we are negotiating about elections, we are negotiating about the transfer of authority, we are negotiating about security and economy. All this is under negotiation. We said that in the middle of the negotiations we are not going to publish anything about their nature or their progress. What I can say is, the negotiations are going on, and I do hope that sooner or later we shall come up with some solutions.

Q: Is May 1996 still a sacred date for starting final status negotiations with the Palestinians?

FM PERES: We are obliged by everything we have signed, provided that the other party will also do everything they have signed. In their signature, the Palestinian Authority took upon itself to fight terror, to bring an end to the Palestine Covenant. We shall respect all items of the DOP [Declaration of Principles], in spirit and letter, but this is not an agreement with ourselves. It's an agreement with another party, and we expect the other party to do likewise. You cannot have a one-sided implementation. It must be mutually implemented. And I do hope that the Palestinians will remain faithful to their own obligations, and whatever we promised, and signed, we will fulfill.

Q: Does that mean that you will start negotiations on the final status in May 1996, respecting the date of Oslo, on condition that the Palestinians fulfill all their obligations?

FM PERES: No, you are not quoting the DOP. You are trying to make an improved DOP. The DOP has some qualifications about the testing of the implementation. Until now, we have fulfilled everything. There was a postponement in time because there was a postponement in the implementation of what the Palestinians have had to do. We said to the Palestinians that our concern is mainly one, and that is security. And everybody can understand why.

PEACE ECONOMY

Q: To what degree have the Europeans fulfilled their commitments to the Palestinian Authority?

FM PERES: The Europeans say they did. We estimate that probably two-thirds of the promises were fulfilled, one-third remains. Basically, we have a problem with all that's happening now in the world. As you cannot make wars without ammunition, you cannot make peace without foreign assistance. Because the leaders have to show their own people that peace brings some material advantages to their own people. For example, we were very worried at the fact that there was a promise to Jordan that they will be forgiven 275 million dollars, and all of sudden it was cut to 50 million dollars. It paints a very alarming situation. What I can say is that you can be very restrained in foreign aid right now. But if as a result of this slowdown of the peace process, fundamentalism will grow, then I think whoever is trying now to save money will have to pay double and triple as much—because of the control of fundamentalists on the oil sources, because of the spread of terror, because of the instability that may occur. I think it is wiser to invest right now small amounts of money—and, by the way, I'm not asking anything for Israel, we are really talking about our neighbors who need economic support to initiate an improvement in their own economies.

So I regret very much the reluctance in providing the necessary funds, like in the case of water for Jordan. We have nothing to gain from an investment that will not affect Israel. We, ourselves, gave the Jordanians 50 million cubic meters of our own sources, which are not

unlimited. I think that peace requires a certain generosity. For many years, our friends in Europe, our friends in the United States and elsewhere, said: You must make peace with the Palestinians, you have to recognize the PLO, you have to solve the problems. We did.

Now I think that our friends have also to do their part, have to participate to make the Palestinian new reality a success. Israel is doing it—we have to give back land, we have to give back authority. We have to do it while terror still prevails, and every time we have to face a new demand and a new pressure. It's not simple. It cannot be put only upon the shoulders of Israel. There is a tendency all the time to accuse Israel. Today Israel is asking her friends: How about you? The time has come that you will also contribute seriously in the attempt to solve the situation.

Q: You stressed that peace needs to show material advantages and that the donor countries should give more. But what is causing the deeper economic depression on the West Bank and Gaza is banning most Palestinian labor from entering Israel. How can you ask the donor countries to give more when the economic reality there is being determined by the Israeli closure?

FM PERES: The Israelis didn't do it arbitrarily. We did it because we have a real problem of security. We wish that the Palestinians could control security at the places where they are responsible.

What we are really trying to do is: We came with a project of paving the separating line between the Palestinians and ourselves with a line of industrial parks, which will not have to bring the Arab laborers to Israel but can bring the Israeli work to the Palestinians, where they are. We want to build five parks along the dividing line between us and the West Bank. We want to build three around Gaza, all on the Palestinians side.

The Palestinians agreed to it. We are really interested in economic development. For us, too, it creates a great deal of problems and a great deal of financial difficulties, because we have to maintain peace and hence our alertness concerning our security. Peace didn't save Israel a single penny. On the contrary. Because of terror and because of violence, we have to increase our attention and alertness. We also have a real problem. The problem is not only closure. The problem is the security of our people.

We want to do the same along the Jordanian-Israeli frontier, in the 'Arava—to convert the whole area from a desert into an industrial, agricultural, tourist zone. The idea that I am so advocating came to my mind when I saw the bridges in Venice. On every bridge you have a build-up of business. So the bridge is not just a bridge, it's also a concentration of business, of small shops, etc. We want to convert the whole frontier.

Q: You talk about industrial parks. It takes two, three, four, or five years to build something like that up. What should the people, for example, in Gaza who have work in Israel do until then?

FM PERES: It doesn't have to take four or more years. It can take 6-12 months to build it, and when you build you also provide work, because building is also working. There are plans which can be implemented even quicker than that. For example, we have suggested to build in Gaza a concentration of greenhouses for flowers and strawberries. We suggested to build 5,000 dunams of it, and every dunam can provide work for three families. This can immediately give 15,000 jobs. And 20,000 people from Gaza are working anyway here—10,000 with permission and 10,000 permanent professionals, doctors, etc. So we are not blind to the needs.

Furthermore, we have asked the United States, and the United States has agreed, that those industrial parks, while on the Palestinian side, will have the same advantages as the Israeli economy has vis-a-vis the United States, namely it will be considered as part of the free trade agreement.

Mr. Kantor, with whom I spoke and recommended to the President, called up Mr. Breton in Brussels and suggested that the same rules which exist between the Common Market and Israel will also relate to the industrial parks, and the European Union agreed to it, too. [sentence as received] So, those industrial parks may have clear advantages.

Q: A few years ago you advocated the idea of a common market in the Middle East. You just talked about problems with getting the economy to work in the Arab world. I think maybe an example is Egypt, where the government is for peace but the people have not seen fruits of this. How do you see the idea of a common market now?

FM PERES: I do not believe there is a Middle East economy. There may be Middle East poverty, but not a Middle East economy. The economy today is global and the rules are universal. Namely, it's a market economy with open borders, with free trade, a GATT agreement, competition, modern infrastructure. If somebody refuses to join in, he is punishing himself. I didn't invent a new Middle East. President Mubarak asked me if we want to integrate ourselves in the Middle East. I told him, in my eyes the problem is different: is the Middle East ready to integrate itself in the 21st century? I do not see how anybody can escape the choice, unless he wants to be out of it. This is an economy which is based more on science than on land, more on technology than on natural resources, more on knowledge than on customs. I don't see that anybody can escape it. Sooner or later it will happen.

We can see many beginnings. First of all, I hope that the Middle East Development Bank will be approved finally. This will be the first positive institution in the Middle East, that will deal not with boycotts but with mobilization of means. The aim of this bank is not to give loans to countries, but to give loans to regional projects. We are going to have the Amman Conference by the end of October. At that conference, we have agreed already with

the Jordanians on some projects which are very imaginative and that fit the idea of a new Middle East. For example, we have an airport that was north of Elat; they have an airport north of 'Aqaba. Since our airport, with the extension of Elat, became part of the city, we decided to build a new one north of Elat. We asked ourselves: Why should we have two airports separated by a distance of 9 miles? Let's approach the Jordanians and suggest that their airport will become an international one and there will be an Israeli terminal there. In principle, they have agreed. This is an indication of what I mean by a new Middle East. It's logic.

The second example is, we want to create a free trade zone that will comprise Taba, 'Aqaba and Elat, connected with a ring road and a chain of hotels. Here, again, the United States announced that if this will be done, the three will be considered as part of our agreement with the United States as part of the free trade agreement between us and the United States, and the same will happen with the Common Market.

Everything takes time. We have to fight convention and we have to fight skepticism. We have to fight worries. Everything new that you do creates a whole establishment of opposition, of resentment. When I read some of the media I think there is an attempt to become undertakers of a modern age. I don't know why. Who can run away from the new realities, and why should they? We are very angry when somebody says that Israel wants to dominate the economy of the Middle East. There is no economy in the Middle East; there is poverty in the Middle East. Why does anyone think that we want to dominate the poverty? We want to participate in improving the situation, only as a participant, not as a leader. We told our Arab friends: If you are afraid that we want to dominate your country, tell us. In five minutes we are out, no more.

As a matter of fact, the Arabs have boycotted the Israeli economy. As a result, we built an economy which is not connected to the Middle East, and we are doing fine. As a matter of fact, we have to 'thank' the Arab world for their boycott. It forced us to build an economy totally based on high-tech, independent. What we are ready is to share with other countries, as we do. We have an ongoing project with Egyptians, the Americans and us on agriculture, which undoubtedly helped a great deal the development of the Egyptian agriculture. Israel didn't make a penny on it and doesn't have any intention. We share with whoever wants to share with us, and we can share what we have. But our desire is sincerely to become a participant, not a dominator. We are not giving up real estate in order to win economic control. It doesn't make any sense.

SYRIA

Q: (On negotiations with Syria)

FM PERES: The problem is clear. When you start negotiations, there are certain assumptions. One is that

each party has an opening position, and you don't try to force the other party to give up the opening situation at the opening of the negotiations. That's what the Syrians are trying to do.

They say: 'First of all, accept our views and announce loud and clear that Israel will give up everything, and then we shall negotiate.' What are we going to negotiate? We don't tell the Syrians to change their position.

They cannot tell us to change our position, particularly when we didn't exclude the possibility of a withdrawal. But at the opening stage, what do they expect to happen?

I appreciate the fact that strategically Syria has divorced war, but they didn't marry peace. They remain a strategic 'bachelor' for the time being.

LEBANON

Q: What is the official explanation for the blockade of the Lebanese ports?

FM PERES: There is no blockade. From time to time there are searches aboard ships that we think are either smuggling arms or terrorists. There is nothing like a blockade. It's very sporadic and done only when we have reasons to do so.

Q: It has nothing to do with the situation in the so-called security zone?

FM PERES: No. It has to do with the violence in the security zone, if we have proper information. But we didn't put any blockade on the Lebanese shores. The problem is that they smuggle arms in small boats into the security zone, or elsewhere, at points that may endanger our security.

Q: So the searching of the ships is not connected with the conditions of people in the security zone.

FM PERES: No, this is purely and only connected with security needs. It has nothing to do with anything else.

Q: (inaudible)

FM PERES: Somebody will have to find out who took away the independence from Lebanon, Israel or somebody else. You will probably discover that we are not the occupier of Lebanon.

ISRAEL-EUROPE (EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE)

Q: Can you tell us what you think the significance of the visit the end of the next week of Mr. Major, the second British Prime Minister to visit Israel, is, and what will you be discussing?

FM PERES: We have quite a line of issues. First of all, the relations between Great Britain and Israel are quite a rich agenda. In the domain of economy and trade, we would clearly like to see more British enterprises and initiative in the economic field in the Middle East, and we shall encourage and call for it, not only in Israel but

around Israel. Secondly, Great Britain is a very important party in the European Union, and we shall clearly discuss what should be, in our judgment, the contribution of the European Union to the Middle East.

We are also working on an educational conference. Israel has practically computerized its educational system. We have today a computer for every 11 children from the age of 4 and up, and the results are very important. We approached the European Union, and we have suggested that the European Union will propose to all the countries in the Middle East to computerize their own education. Over 60 percent of the people in the Middle East are below the age of 18. It's a huge school. If unemployment may affect the grown-ups, ignorance may affect the young people. It is the first time, to the best of my knowledge, that diplomacy addresses itself to the young generation and looks upon education as a promising means to pacify the area.

This sort of a project will be discussed with Prime Minister Major. We shall also go over the peace process, see what can be done, what can be the British contribution. So we welcome very much this visit.

NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty]

Q: Could you comment on Egypt and their newly awakened interest in the NPT?

FM PERES: Why now? Because now they are negotiating to renew the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It should be renewed in April, and Egypt was asked to sign, actually not to withdraw her signature because she is already signed. There is an argument going on about what will be the duration of the NPT—will it be limited in time, or unlimited—and today President Clinton said that he sees in it a major issue and wants to have it without any limitations, as far as the duration of the treaty is concerned. We didn't ask the Egyptian to sign, it's not our job, and we didn't make any conditions about our position. The difference stems from an interesting layout.

Whereas the issue of signing the NPT resides between Egypt and the United States, the issue of Israel not signing resides between Israel and Iran. We do not see a connection between the two.

Israel is the only country in the world that another country is threatening to destroy physically, militarily and otherwise. Not only are they threatening, but they are trying to get a nuclear option and missiles to do so. So we do not feel that we have to come the Iranians and say:

Gentlemen, since we have learned that you want to destroy us, don't be worried, go ahead and do it.

We feel that the Iranian suspicion is our deterrent. We do not see it in the connection of our relations with Egypt. Nobody is threatening Egypt.

When we signed the Camp David agreement, the same situation existed. Nothing has changed, neither in distances nor in knowledge. The Egyptians want us to

declare our readiness to have a nuclear-free Middle East once we shall achieve peace. Our answer is yes. But clearly, for us, a peaceful Middle East should include all the members of the Arab League and Iran, and then we are seriously ready to negotiate a nuclear-free zone. But as long as we are being threatened and as long as we have only peace relations with Egypt, Jordan and we are beginning with the Palestinians, and there is a beginning with Moroccans, Algerians and Tunisians, it's very far from having a comprehensive peace. Israel is making peace and Israel is paying for peace. We are giving back land, we are giving back authority, the Arab boycott did not cease, terror didn't stop. I don't know any example in history that any nation did something like it.

Q: Why are you maintaining the famous secret about the number of nuclear bombs that Israel has?

FM PERES: Our secret has nothing to do with mathematics. We said that we are not going to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East, and that was the end of the story. I don't know anybody who counted bombs that may exist and may not exist. 'Amr Musa told me: Look, why do you object that I shall come and visit Dimona? I told him: It's very dangerous. He said: Why? I said: What if you will come and you will discover there is nothing there, and you will spread the story. What are we going to do then?

Peres Disappointed With Congress Decision on Jordan

TA0303074995 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 3 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by correspondents Ya'akov Eylon and Tamar Landau; place not given—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Eylon] Good morning, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres.

[Peres] Good morning.

[Eylon] Both President Clinton and Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin sound quite disappointed with the U.S. Congress. Are you?

[Peres] Yes, but I hope it was not their final word. The Jordanians had been given promises, including the promise to write off \$275 million this year, and yet only \$50 million were written off. This presents a double problem: First, promises should be kept, and second, the Jordanian leadership has to show its people that peace bears fruit. In general terms, just as you cannot wage a war without ammunition, you cannot make peace without outside help.

[Eylon] So much for the Jordanian issue. Are you also worried about initiatives launched by the more Republican and the more isolationist, perhaps somewhat more nationalistic, congress, which is more concerned about the American taxpayer's pocket?

[Peres] I do not want to label either the Congress or the Republican Party. They are at the beginning of their term, and I hope they will move further to the center. Anyway, I have no desire to attach blame—that is not how my mind works. However, the U.S. role and centrality in the various peace processes in the world are at stake here. In the present situation, the world needs the Americans as much as the United States needs the world; this goes beyond the mere Jordanian-U.S. issue.

[Landau] Minister Peres, the FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE today carries another report on Ron Arad. My question is whether today's report, which says Ron Arad is being held by a radical group and not by the Iranian authorities, is being given credence, or whether Israel adheres to its stand that the Iranian regime is responsible for Ron Arad's fate.

[Peres] We are very worried about all these reports, which are based on unverified and unreliable information and thus create false hopes. We are sorry they cause the Arad family distress and disappointment. We do not have any information beyond what we have already revealed. I believe all other information is mere speculation.

[Eylon] Another matter, Mr. Peres: Former Chief of Staff Ehud Barak has formally retired from the army, and there is every indication that he will soon join the government. Are you glad about it?

[Peres] Very much.

[Eylon] Why?

[Peres] Because I think he is a man of caliber, and because I think we need to prepare cadres for the next generation of Israeli politics, and I think he is one of those who deserve to belong to these cadres.

[Eylon] Thank you very much, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres.

[Peres] All the best.

Government Statement on 1967 Refugee Return 'Clarified'

TA0203181995 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel
1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 2 Mar 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Foreign Ministry has clarified that no decision has been adopted by the ministry's administration regarding those displaced from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967.

Our political affairs correspondent Shlomo Ganor reports that in a statement of clarification issued this evening, the Foreign Ministry pointed out that in the Camp David accords and the Declaration of Principles with the Palestinians, Israel agreed to permit the return of those who left Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip in 1967 provided this will not create chaos and disorder. The statement added that the meeting, which will be held

next week in Amman to discuss the issue, will be an unofficial meeting, during which the entire problem will be discussed, including the criteria for determining the number of the displaced and the body which will determine this number. The statement noted that it is still unclear how this committee will function in the future.

Security Officials View 'Lull' in 'Terrorism'

TA0303111995 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 3 Mar 95 p 8

[Article by Steve Rodan: "Lull in Terrorism: Is It Temporary?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Every Thursday morning at the Defense Ministry in Tel Aviv, senior officials and IDF [Israel Defense Forces] commanders gather for their weekly review.

After one recent session, someone wondered aloud about how quiet Palestinian terrorists have been lately. "Shh," replied a defense official, raising a finger to his lips and then rapping his knuckles twice on a large wooden desk.

It's a feeling being expressed in an increasing number of meetings and forums in which ministers, parliamentarians and officials discuss security issues.

They want to know why Palestinians have not succeeded in any major terrorist operations since January 22, when 21 people were killed in a double suicide bombing by Islamists at the Bet Lid junction near Netanya.

Security officials have been surprised at the quiet passing of Ramadan, during which they expected an upsurge in violence.

Likud MK [Knesset Member] Moshe Nisim wanted the view of Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq at Tuesday's session of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. Shahaq, according to the participants, chose his words carefully.

"The scope of the terrorist incident at Bet Lid shocked not only us but the Palestinians," Shahaq reportedly said. "They are resting on their laurels."

Privately, defense officials agree. They cite several reasons for the lull in terrorism. One is their assessment that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic terrorists are reorganizing. The attack on Bet Lid might have raised their stock in the territories, but it also brought them close to a clash with Palestinian Authority [PA] head Yasir 'Arafat.

Defense officials, basing their assessments on intelligence briefings, say Hamas and Islamic Jihad have decided not to press their luck. Their aim is not to spark a revolt against 'Arafat, but to erode his support until he is little more than a figurehead.

Maj.-Gen. Dani Rothchild, the outgoing government coordinator for the territories, recalls how a Hamas leader explained his movement's approach.

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"We won't shoot the head of the pyramid," the Hamas leader told Rothschild. "Look at what happened in Egypt. They knocked off (President Anwar) al-Sadat and got somebody much worse. Our way is to win the support of the populace and then the head will be toppled through democratic means."

Defense officials say Hamas's low profile is similar to its behavior in the months following 'Arafat's arrival in June. Then, too, Islamic groups trod carefully, shunning earlier spectacular terror bombings on Israeli buses.

They probed 'Arafat's reaction, first to the killing of suspected Israeli collaborators within Gaza and then by shooting attacks against soldiers and settlers.

By October, intelligence sources say, Islamic groups concluded that 'Arafat would tolerate a terror campaign. At that point, preparations began for large-scale attacks, such as the bombing of a No. 5 bus in Tel Aviv on October 21 and the explosions at Bet Lid three months later.

Senior defense officials say 'Arafat has taken his first serious steps to stop Islamic terrorism since the Bet Lid attack. After trying to sweet-talk Hamas, they say, 'Arafat has quietly sent the message that he will not tolerate any sort of attack that delays Israeli implementation of its agreement to withdraw the army from the Arab towns and cities of Judea and Samaria.

'Arafat acknowledged this to the Israelis at a meeting with Prime Minister Rabin on February 9, a senior defense official says. "He said that in the first period after his arrival, which he didn't define, he tried to tempt Hamas," the official recalls. "It didn't work, he said, and now he's really doing something."

At the meeting, the official recalls, 'Arafat's chief aide Nabil Sha'th added he was surprised by 'Arafat's candor and confirmed the new policy. "I looked in their eyes and I didn't think it was staged," the official says.

Senior military sources agree that 'Arafat is trying to stop terrorism his way. He has allowed his aides to increase security cooperation with the IDF and security services. These include joint operations to stop infiltration from the Sinai and locate sabotage material. IDF commanders say that during the last few weeks the army and PA police have found 160 anti-tank mines smuggled into Gaza.

'Arafat, the military sources agree, has made stopping Hamas attacks a priority. But, they add, he is doing virtually nothing against members of Hamas or Islamic Jihad.

In other words, the sources say, 'Arafat's secret police have managed to scuttle plans by Islamic terrorists to plant bombs on Israeli buses and shopping centers. Few arrests have been made, however, and none of the detained has been prosecuted.

Another reason for the lull in terrorism is the increased effort of Israeli security services, defense officials say. The closure has made it easier for police and the Shin Bet to spot Palestinians residing illegally in Israel.

The arrest of more than 1,500 suspected Hamas activists has enabled security forces to uncover several terrorist cells.

But officials say that Hamas and Islamic Jihad are proving resistant to the Israeli security measures.

"They're hard to break," one official says. Also, don't forget that we're dealing with suicide bombers. If they're not scared to die, you think they're scared of the Shin Bet?"

Few in the military or security services believe the lull in terrorism is permanent. Officials cite several major bombing attacks against Jewish targets in the Gaza Strip, the latest one on Wednesday near Netzarim in which nobody was injured.

Officials say 'Arafat has set a goal—to provide a period of calm in which Israel will agree to implement an IDF redeployment in the territories. At that point, they say, without an army presence, terrorism will skyrocket.

Such an assessment was relayed by IDF Intelligence research division head Brig.-Gen. Ya'akov 'Amid Or, who last week appeared before a committee headed by Police Minister Moshe Shahal that is to recommend how to implement separation between Palestinians and Israelis.

"The message we're getting is that the current cooperation between us and the Palestinians is tactical, to get us to withdraw," a senior defense official says. "And once we do, in terms of security, an IDF redeployment would be a catastrophe."

IDF Said To Support Talks on Permanent Arrangement

TA0303121495 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 3 Mar 95
p 2

[Report by Hemi Shalev]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "Senior IDF [Israel Defense Forces] officers and defense establishment officials support Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin's stand on a dialogue with the Palestinians on an interim settlement and the immediate commencement of talks on a permanent settlement," political sources in Jerusalem said yesterday.

The IDF is seriously concerned about the security repercussions of redeploying within the framework of an interim arrangement; therefore, in internal deliberations, there are calls for moving directly onto the permanent settlement.

Among those supporting a dialogue on the permanent settlement are officials who recommend implementing

the first stage of an interim arrangement—elections in the territories—and then negotiating with the elected Palestinian council on the permanent arrangement. Under this scenario, the IDF will not have to implement the second stage of the interim arrangement—a comprehensive redeployment on the West Bank.

Foreign Ministry Director General Uri Savir said yesterday that there is no possibility of deviating from the Oslo accord and going straight onto the permanent settlement talks "because issues involved in the permanent arrangement cannot be resolved at present." [passage omitted]

Anti-Iran Campaign Expected To Lead to Arad's Release

TA0203160695 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 2 Mar 95
pp 1, 2

[Report by Hemi Shalev]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israel will launch an extensive anti-Iran information campaign in a bid to draw international attention to the fate of missing navigator Ron Arad and pressure Iran to admit to its responsibility to his fate and release him.

Sources in Jerusalem said yesterday that discussions about the information offensive are currently under way

with the participation of the bodies handling the Arad affair, including the Foreign Ministry and the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch. The offensive will highlight Iran's support for international terror.

The discussions about the media campaign began before the reports on Ron Arad appeared in the German paper FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE. Recent testimony corroborated the basic information in Israel's possession to the effect that Ron Arad is being held by Iran, apparently on Iranian soil, although Israeli sources doubt some elements in that testimony.

An Israeli intelligence body, which conducted a thorough study of the Ron Arad affair a few months ago, reached the conclusion that the Israeli navigator apparently is alive and being held by the Iranians or their lackeys.

Israeli sources regard as credible the testimony of Kubilay Mamili [name as transliterated], a German citizen of Turkish origin who was released from an Iranian prison at the end of January. Last week, he recounted that while strolling in the prison yard an Iranian inmate told him that an Israeli pilot whose plane had been downed over Lebanon was being kept in solitary confinement Block No. 209 which belongs to the security police. [passage omitted]

Husayn Postpones Austria Visit Due to Illness

AU0303114695 Vienna DIE PRESSE in German
3 Mar 95 p 5

[APA report: "King Husayn Postpones Visit"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Vienna—Because of illness, King Husayn of Jordan will not come to the award ceremony for the "Kurt Waldheim Peace Prize for Conflict Solving" planned in Vienna on 3 March. Husayn called Waldheim and asked that the ceremony be postponed.

Undergoes Minor Surgery in Amman

JN0303122795 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Royal Hashemite Court has announced that his majesty the king has undergone a minor operation at al-Husayn Medical City to eradicate an inferior nasal cyst. The Royal Court said that his majesty is now in an excellent health after the operation.

Education Minister: Hebrew Culture 'Empty'

MM0203161995 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 2 Mar 95 p 6

[Unattributed report: "Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Hebrew Culture Is Empty and Has No Peripheries; Amman Will Not Accept Israeli Calls for Education Conferences"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah has announced Jordan's rejection of Israeli calls for conferences and meetings between officials from both countries to discuss future cooperation in the fields of education and higher education. He said Arab culture is much more profound than Hebrew culture, which he described as empty with no peripheries.

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, al-Rawabidah said that there will be no cultural contacts between Jordan and Israel before the Middle East peace process is completed and the cultural and psychological hostility ends as the state of war, military hostility, and economic boycott ended.

This rejection came in a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT by 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah, the Jordanian deputy prime minister and education minister, who said: Jordan has ignored several invitations addressed to it by Israeli official and popular institutions urging meetings between education officials from both countries, because Jordan wants to avoid cultural and educational normalization with Israel before the completion of the peace process. [passage omitted]

Al-Rawabidah also said that despite the peace treaty with Israel, peace on the Jordanian-Israeli track required

more efforts and negotiations to conclude agreements that would regulate future relations between the two sides. [passage omitted]

Al-Rawabidah added that the education syllabi cannot be changed and the philosophy on which the Jordanian education institution is based cannot be amended unless Israel proves its credibility and serious desire to establish a comprehensive, just, and durable peace in the Middle East. He said that the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty was not the end of the road but was rather the beginning of a long peace road. He added that the treaty covered a number of Jordanian-Israeli bilateral issues as well as the refugees affairs task force emanating from the multilateral negotiations, but the peace process as a whole requires more negotiations to resolve a number of fundamental issues which directly affect Jordan. Then, he said, we could reconsider education policy and changing and amending the education syllabi to suit the peace era. [passage omitted]

Amman, PLO Said To Agree on Control of Jerusalem Sites

TA0303064595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordan's status at the holy sites of Jerusalem has changed in the wake of the most recent meeting between King Husayn and Yasir 'Arafat. Jordanian journalist Sultan al-Hattab, who is close to King Husayn, says that the meeting terminated Jordan's status as the religious custodian of the Muslim shrines and that it now plays the nonpolitical role of a religious supervisor. Sultan al-Hattab made these remarks in a conversation with our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem. He added that there are no more disagreements between Jordan and the PLO on the control of Jerusalem's holy sites.

Paper Urges Slowing Down of Israel Normalization

JN2802151695 Amman AL-JAMAHIR in Arabic 1-15 Mar 95 p 1

[Editorial: "Let Normalization With Israel Stop"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It seems that there is a government program to impose normalization with Israel on the Jordanian people by the force of law, and to readjust Jordanian society to fall in harmony with the provisions and terms of the treaty.

This approach deals with the treaty in a legal manner, away from the historical circumstances, political considerations, and the developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and even away from the Israeli stand toward Jordanian national rights.

Within this program, the government submitted three draft laws canceling the boycott of Israel, and allowing it to own land and carry out various economic and investment activities in Jordan.

Our higher national interests necessitate that Jordan slow down, at least on the measures of normalization, and

exploit this issue, which is the only one left in its hands, in order to wrest its remaining national rights from Israel.

Israel, based on the peace treaty and its annexes, enjoys actual sovereignty and rights that enable it to dispose of Jordanian land and water in the al-Yarmuk and Wadi al-'Arabah areas. The treaty entitles Israel to maintain these rights for the next 25 years, providing that they are renewable.

Moreover, Israel still refuses to comply with the international resolutions and charters that call for a just solution to the refugees and the displaced issues, which are at the heart of Jordanian interests. In addition to this, a solution to the Palestine question has reached a deadlock.

The government should wrest all its national rights from Israel instead of opening the doors wide to it, and imposing normalization on the citizens by the force of law.

Husayn Receives Calls From Clinton, Yemen's Salih

JN0303063695 Amman Radio Jordan in English 0530 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His Majesty King Husayn has received a phone call from U.S. President Bill Clinton who conveyed his best wishes and congratulations to his majesty the king on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr.

President Clinton paid tribute to the king's wisdom and Jordan's efforts to achieve a comprehensive and permanent peace in the region. He underlined U.S. commitment to extend every support to the kingdom.

His majesty also received a telephone call from Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih. Both leaders exchanged well wishes on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr and discussed means to settle Arab differences and bolster pan-Arab action for the interest of the nation and the future generations.

Prime Minister Leaves on Private Visit to Turkey

JN0203181695 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, His Excellency Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir left for Turkey on a private visit that will last for three days. His excellency was seen off at the airport by the two deputy prime ministers, who are also the ministers of education and information, and the minister of state for cabinet affairs.

Two Weeklies Suspended; Publishers Contest

JN2702101795 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 27 Feb 95 pp 12, 7

["Special" to JORDAN TIMES by Sa'idah Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The director of the Press and Publications Department (PPD), Muhammad Amin, Sunday [26 February] decided to suspend the

publication of two weeklies on the basis that their chief editors do not meet all the requirements set in the law.

Publishers of the two newspapers contested the decision and charged that it was part of a campaign launched against them.

The Monday newspapers, HAWADITH AL-SA'AH (events of the hour) and AL-BILAD (the country), will not appear today. But they "will be able to start reprinting as soon as their chief editors obtain the legal status or as soon as new chief editors who meet the legal requirements are appointed," according to Mr. Amin.

In a letter sent on Sunday to the two tabloids—a copy of which was also sent to AL-DUSTUR publishing house where the two papers are regularly printed—Mr. Amin called on the two periodicals "to stop their publication until their status is corrected in accordance with the law."

But the publishers of the two weeklies said the newly-appointed chief editors have been accepted as Jordan Press Association (JPA) members and have obtained their membership cards in August.

"But they were not sworn in," said Mr. Amin.

According to Mr. Amin, Yusuf Ghishan and Jamal Shawahin, who were appointed last month as chief editors of AL-BILAD and HAWADITH AL-SA'AH respectively, replacing Nidal Mansur and Ruba Karasinah, applied last year for JPA membership and were accepted as members, but so far did not take the oath.

"They cannot be considered full members until they take the oath," said Sulayman al-Qudah, the JPA president. "The swearing-in ceremony will take place after the 'Eid," Mr. al-Qudah said.

The publisher of AL-BILAD, Nayif Turah, said swearing-in was not a prerequisite according to the law. He said that Mr. Amin's decision was only a pretext to put pressure on the two tabloids because they publish news that are not in line with the government's policies.

"I would call it (the decision) a regression from democracy," Mr. Turah said. "We're going back to the martial law era."

AL-BILAD obtained a licence to print locally in June 1993, a month after the new Press and Publications Law was enacted. Before that and from 1991 to 1993 it used to print abroad.

According to Mr. Turah, his newspaper faced overstatement and confiscation several times before and after the enactment of the press law.

HAWADITH AL-SA'AH was licensed in June. Riyad al-Hurub, publisher of HAWADITH AL-SA'AH and SHIHAN, accused the government of conspiring against them.

"They (the government) are looking for ways to hurt us," he said. "I believe it is done on purpose."

Dr. al-Hurub said he will appoint a new but temporary chief editor until Mr. Shawahin takes the oath.

The two newspapers as well as SHIHAN, have come under attack by JPA because of what the association described as the newspapers' tendency to overstate facts and publish material that infringed on general ethics and moral standards.

In a memo sent last month to the chief editors of the three weeklies, the JPA threatened to refer them to a disciplinary council if they refused to comply with the pertinent laws and regulations. JPA charged then that the newspapers were publishing fabricated stories, obscene photos and inaccurate news.

However, Mr. Amin said his decision to close the two weeklies "has nothing to do with other issues." He said he was "only applying the law."

Industrialists on Cooperation Accord With Iraq

JN2502085195 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English
25 Feb 95 p 2

[Article by a JORDAN TIMES staff reporter]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Jordanian and Iraqi industrialists have agreed to set up a joint committee to work out specifics in industrial cooperation between the two sides and follow-up a memorandum of understanding they signed in Baghdad last week, an advisor to the Amman Chamber of Industry said Friday.

'Ali al-Dajani, the advisor, emphasised that the envisaged Jordanian-Iraqi cooperation would in no way violate the international sanctions imposed on Iraq in August 1990 following that country's invasion of Kuwait.

"We are fully committed to and are abiding by the sanctions against Iraq, and have no intention whatsoever to contravene the terms of the sanctions," Mr. al-Dajani told the JORDAN TIMES. "The cooperation that we expect between Jordan and Iraq will be strictly within the framework of the exemptions granted from the sanctions."

"Any interpretations to the contrary will be simply meaningless and without substance," he added.

Mr. al-Dajani was commenting on the memorandum signed by an Amman Chamber of Industry with the Iraqi Federation of Industries and Federation of Chambers Industries and Commerce in Baghdad last week.

The memorandum of understanding calls for cooperation in the fields of industry, food, textile and construction.

"The memorandum also stipulates that Jordanian industries would advise Iraqi industries on rebuilding and reoperating some of the factories which are no longer operative," said Mr. al-Dajani. "The involvement of Jordanian industries in this context would be strictly in an advisory capacity."

Some of the industries are also military facilities which are being converted for civilian use after they were rendered obsolete in their present form following Iraq's compliance with the U.N. terms of the ceasefire that ended the Gulf war over Kuwait in early 1991.

A businessman cited an example: "There is a large number clothing establishments affiliated with the Iraqi military. These used to produce uniforms for the Iraqi armed forces. With the reduction of the numerical strength of the Iraqi army, some of these facilities are rendered obsolete, and Jordanians could advise the Iraqis on how to make use of the extra capacity that is available."

The joint committee that was agreed upon will be formed after an Amman Chamber of Commerce delegation visits Iraq next month, Mr. al-Dajani said.

"There will be close coordination between the Amman Chamber of Industry and the Amman Chamber of Commerce on the one hand and the Iraqis on the other," he said.

Mr. al-Dajani said he was not aware of any Amman Chamber of Industry plans to hold an exhibition of Jordanian industrial products in Baghdad in April as reported by the Baghdad Observer.

"The Amman Chamber of Industry is planning a national exhibition in Amman in May to mark the occasion of Jordan's Independence day," He said. "Iraqis will be invited to the exhibition. Beyond that, I am not aware of any plans to hold a Jordanian exhibition in Baghdad as reported."

Khalidun Abu-Hassan, president of the Amman Chamber of Industry, led the delegation to the visit to Iraq. The delegation returned home late Wednesday.

The memorandum signed in Baghdad is largely seen as a landmark accord that ensures a key Jordanian role in Iraq after the sanctions are eased-lifted to allow some of the envisaged cooperation.

It was also a key achievement in particular for the Jordanian industrial sector, which has been watching with apprehension the steady flow of international trade delegations to Baghdad through Amman and reports of "billions of dollars" worth of "post-sanctions" contracts being discussed in Baghdad.

In talks that the delegation held in Baghdad, it was also agreed that Iraq would increase its post-sanctions imports from Jordan. While little elaboration was available on this count, it was taken to mean that Iraq would direct its post-sanctions orders to Jordan for products that it is now getting from Turkey and Iran.

No definite statistics are available on the flow of such Turkish and Iranian products as well as goods from elsewhere but channeled through the northern and eastern neighbours of Iraq. Both Ankara and Tehran deny charges that Turks and Iranians are violating the sanctions and would release little statistics except to say that their exports to Iraq are strictly food and medicine.

Israeli Naval Blockade, Shelling of South Continues*NC0303073295 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 3 Mar 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] Zionist aggressions against the liberated areas adjacent to the occupied border strip have continued. The naval blockade imposed by the occupation authorities against part of the southern coast is still in force for the fourth consecutive week.

The acts of aggression were as follows: At 0300 today, artillery shelling targeted Jabal al-Rafi' and al-Wadi al-Akhdar in Iqlim al-Tuffah for one hour. The shelling was resumed at 0645, and it was accompanied this time by machine-gun fire directed at the valleys adjacent to the occupation posts in al-Suwayda' and al-Dabshah. At 0500, Mazra'at 'Ali al-Tahir, the deserted Lebanese Army barracks in al-Nabatiyah, and the eastern hills of Kafr Rumman came under shelling that continued until 0615. This was accompanied by machine-gun fire directed at the same areas, and by other machine-gun fire directed at the Yahmur woods from Qal'at al-Shaqif.

Last night, the occupation forces shelled the outer parts of Habbush, al-Jabal al-Rafi', and al-Luwayzah in Iqlim al-Tuffah while Zionist gunboats cruised off the southern coast from al-Qasimiyah to al-Sarafand. Security sources said that since 0530 today, at least 10 large-caliber artillery rounds fell on the periphery of Kafra, Sribbin, and Tallat al-Huqban; they were fired from enemy positions in Rshaf. The night shelling targeted the outer parts of Haddatha, 'Ayta al-Jabal, and Haris, and it originated from occupation positions in Bayt Yahun and Haddatha itself. This was accompanied by machine-gun fire and illumination flares.

Article Condemns U.S. Policies, Portrayal of Arabs*NC0203153395 Beirut AL-'AHD in Arabic 24 Feb 95 pp 9*

[Article by Hani 'Abdallah: "A Second American Message"]

[FBIS Translated Text] After the suicide operation carried out by two mujahidin from the Islamic Jihad in Palestine organization against the Zionists in Netanya, which targeted Zionist soldiers and not civilians, voices of condemnation have arisen from most world countries because the ones who were killed were Jews. The world is asked to "salute" the Jews, dead or alive. In this way, the U.S. president wants to suggest that the holocaust against the Jews is continuing.

It is portrayed as though these victims of the world are not to blame at all, and that "Islamic civilization," "Islamic fundamentalism," or "Islamic expansion" are exerting all their efforts to uproot and eradicate the Jews from this world and from the land they claim was promised them 2000 years ago.

Cables of condemnation of the deaths of the Zionist soldiers flooded in from all corners of the earth. Every country where a Zionist lives must submit to the wishes of this Zionist. It must celebrate the victories of the Jews and mourn and condemn the deaths of their criminal soldiers. This rule has been inculcated into the "remnants of the Arabs" in the person of their regimes, which in turn sent their own cables of condemnation. The UN secretary general also did not forget to play his role toward those who employed him to head this international organization out of their appreciation for his services to the Jews. In his turn, he sent cables of condemnation, and had he been able to fight, he would have carried his machine gun and gone to Gaza to fight the Islamists there. However, his position at the head of an international organization prevented him from doing that.

These days, the pictures of our martyrs, our people, our victims in Kafr Rumman reach the whole world. Praise be to God, American television screens follow up events in our country and do not heed the ban. They have absolute freedom in Lebanon. That is how they managed to televise the torn body of the father who embraced his children in Kafr Rumman to protect them with his own body before the shrapnel of the Zionist bombs tore him apart. However, this picture did not succeed in stirring any emotions in the U.S. president.

The same goes for the UN secretary general and the American intelligence employees heading the Arab regimes. This picture, which could have drawn tears from a dumb stone, could not draw any emotions from these people. This atrocity did not even make them bat an eyelid, because the father who was martyred while embracing his children was an Arab, a Muslim; he does not have on his identity card a Jewish name or a six-pointed star.

A few days ago, Washington sent us a list of Lebanon's human rights violations. Now, it is sending us the punishments as the bill. This is how Washington is; it does not forget its friends. If it does forget its friends, it remembers them through the weapons the Jews use. On top of that, there come those who tell you that the United States of America has placed Lebanon once again on its list of interests, among which are a "security committee" and human massacres. What else does the future hold for us?

Report Views Hizballah's Boycott of U.S. Products*NC0303110595 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 27 Feb 95 pp 20-21*

[Report by Nasir Shararah]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] For several weeks, Hizballah loyalists and supporters have been boycotting U.S. goods in response to a fatwa [religious ruling] issued in reaction to Washington's decision freezing the assets of some Islamic leaders and movements in American banks.

"Boycott American Products" is not a new slogan. It was proposed several times in the fifties and the sixties, often accompanied by sharp controversy about its importance, or, more accurately, about the possibility of putting it into practice. [passage omitted]

According to an informed source, the general trend in Hizballah is that this slogan, over used by the forces that controlled the Arab and Islamic street in the past decades, should be handled rationally this time. Hizballah realizes that it is difficult to boycott American products completely and all at once. It is, therefore, calling for smooth, gradual implementation of the slogan. [passage omitted]

There are conflicting reports as to who was behind the idea of the fatwa. While some people attribute it to Hizballah, others believe this was the idea of al-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah. And while both Hizballah shayks and al-Sayyid Fadlallah answer questions posed by those who are observing the fatwa, owners of American companies in Lebanon visit Fadlallah in particular to complain of the harm the fatwa will bring to their material interests. The latest delegation to visit Fadlallah was from a soft drinks company in Lebanon; the delegation protested the fatwa, saying it is unfair to the company. It explained that the company's products must not be classified as American because the ingredients of the soft drinks come from the Netherlands and other European countries, not from the United States.

Moreover, all the company's staff are Lebanese. Fadlallah told the delegation that it should explain all this on television to try to convince those who are complying with the fatwa that the company's products are not American, and therefore are outside the boycott.

Some observers see in this and in other visits to Fadlallah by representatives of companies operating in Lebanon as evidence that the fatwa has had an effect. Otherwise, companies would not have moved toward Fadlallah to try to contain the fatwa's negative impact on the chances of their products in the market. Other observers, however, believe that these moves do not mean that the companies have already begun to feel the heat of the fatwa, but, more precisely, that the companies are trying to avoid any future harm on the sale of their products as a result of the fatwa, especially since these companies have prepared prior studies and polls on market trends and the factors affecting them.

At any rate, Hizballah, according to informed sources, is not expecting major, immediate results that would deal a blow to the consumption of American products as much as it is wagering on making the boycott slogan an Islamic tradition that grows with time so that it may, in the future, become part of the region's culture within the resistance project. Can this slogan be implemented this time, or will it be a continuation of a chronic failure in this regard?

Al-Asad Absent From 'Id al-Fitr Celebrations
JN0203212595

[FBIS Editorial Report] Since the morning of 2 March, the first day of 'Id al-Fitr in Syria, Syrian media monitored by FBIS have been reporting in all their newscasts that Syrian "Vice President Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah performed the 'Id al-Fitr prayers in al-Rawdah Mosque in Damascus this morning, representing His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad"

Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic at 1915 GMT on 2 March and during earlier casts reports the following: "On behalf of His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad, commander in chief of the Army and the Armed Forces and on the occasion of the blessed 'Id al-Fitr, the commanders of the military sectors and areas this morning visited the martyrs cemeteries in Najha and the other governorates, where they laid wreaths and prayed for their pure souls."

Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic at 0457 GMT on 2 March and in subsequent Damascus Television casts does not show al-Asad's attending the 'Id al-Fitr prayers.

Al-Asad Performs Friday Prayer at Damascus Mosque

JN0303123295 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad performed the Friday prayer on the second day of the blessed 'Id al-Fitr at the al-Murabit Mosque in Damascus. Performing the prayer along with the president were People's Assembly Speaker 'Abd-al-Qadir Qaddurah, Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi, Awqaf Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid al-Tarabulsi, several ministers, some People's Assembly members, and a crowd of citizens from the al-Muhajirin quarter.

Afghanistan

Farah Seminarians Send Warning to Taleban

LD0203172995 *Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 2 Mar 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] According to reports, a group of seminarians from theological schools in the Farah Province in western Afghanistan has warned the Taleban group against attacking Kabul. Otherwise, they will attack the positions of the group.

The Farah Province is one of larger provinces of Afghanistan. It is situated south of Herat Province and, along with the three provinces of Nimruz, Badghis, and Fariab, is mainly under the control of Commander Esmael Khan who supports Rabbani.

Meanwhile, some news sources in Islamabad say a group of Taleban movement forces has engaged Esmael Khan's forces in the Farah border area.

Latest Talks Fail; Taleban Demands Control of Kabul

LD0303110995 *Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 3 Mar 95*

[FBIS Translated Text] The special UN delegation to Afghanistan has announced that it has failed in its latest bid to convince the Taleban group to take part in the plan for the transition of power.

These negotiations took place in Kandahar in order to prevent clashes recurring among the rival groups and ensure a peaceful transition of power to a transitional government. Mahmud Ghazi, a member of the four-man UN delegation said: The Taleban continue to demand control over the security of Kabul and say that they will resort to force if their demands are not met.

He expressed concern over the future of Afghanistan, adding: If the Taleban do not take a calm stance or refuse to take part in the plan for the transition power, there is a possibility of heavy clashes in Kabul.

The four-man UN delegation has been given the job of finding a solution to the Afghan crisis following the failure of the UN's previous plan for the peaceful transition of power.

Rabbani Urges UN To Intensify Peace Efforts

LD0203205395 *Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1545 GMT 2 Mar 95*

[Speech by President Borhanoddin Rabbani, on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr, read by presidential spokesman 'Aziz Murad—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted]

Dear compatriots, sisters and brothers. On behalf of myself and the leadership of the Islamic State of Afghanistan I congratulate the arrival of 'Id al-Fitr, to you Muslim, honorable and proud compatriots, to the brave mojahedin, to the patient refugees and the Muslims throughout the world. [passage omitted]

Dear compatriots. By every day the situation develops in the interests of peace and for the sake of ending conflicts and fighting in the country. The clearing operations carried out in Konduz and the clearing of the southern regions of Kabul [of Hekmatyar's forces] are important and valuable factors which have, without doubt, had decisive and undeniable effects to ensure a durable, safe, and nationwide peace.

At present, security is established in Kabul city. Irresponsible armed groups have been withdrawn from the city. Armed men are not allowed to wander around the city, and all of them are stationed in the military headquarters and places of deployment. Weapons and ammunition have been collected and have been stored in the warehouses and depots which existed for this purpose within the framework of the orderly units of the armed forces. A number of the [military] units, whose existence seemed unnecessary and are not needed under the new peace conditions, have even been disbanded. It was based on this spirit that during the last two years in every agreement and accord that was signed, the government stressed the issue of disarmament and collection of heavy weapons. This issue has been one of the main points of those agreements.

At present, the government takes heed of the disarmament issue and emphasizes that the collection of weapons should be carried out under the government's precise supervision. It worth mentioning that with the recent developments the military-political superiority of the Islamic State, as it had always said, has been proved in all fields. [passage omitted]

Dear compatriots: The leadership of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan believes that the disputed issues should be resolved through negotiations and reaching a general understanding. We are of the opinion that the Islamic regime of the country should be organized and developed in a form in which all the nationalities and tribes living in this country, all the regions and all the religions, feel their presence and existence practically.

It is based on this spirit and feelings that we have warmly welcomed the efforts of all the international and internal groups, individuals, missions, and organizations which are directed toward ensuring peace in Afghanistan. The reason the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan declared its decisive and comprehensive support for the efforts made by the UN special mission is based on this belief.

We evaluate as positive [UN envoy] Mahmoud Mestiri's peace efforts. We want him to further increase and intensify his efforts. In confirmation of our earlier statement, I announce one again that the government is ready

for a transfer of power. Of course, the purpose of transfer of power should be to end war and establish peace throughout the country. Therefore, in order to have an effective transfer of power, it is necessary that a mechanism should be created to represent the nation of Afghanistan and illustrate the will of Afghanistan's people to be represented by all the groups and parties. The lack of the existence of such a mechanism raises questions about the meaning and purpose of transfer of power.

The recent political-military developments have brought about a new situation. As a result of these developments and changes, a number of the forces who were considered as the main and important forces have partially withdrawn from the scene. Instead new forces have emerged on the stage. These developments and changes should be taken into account in order to achieve a durable and secure peace.

Taking into account the recent developments, we hope the UN special mission will organize and adjust its efforts in order to secure the formation of a mechanism in which all the forces are represented. And that mechanism will be capable of taking the power.

The experiences of the past two years have shown clearly that fighting is not the solution. Therefore, we invite all the groups and forces, in considering their responsibility to avoiding war, to not test their luck by resorting to fighting. Henceforth under no circumstances should fighting take place—since the government is sincerely ready to embark on negotiation and consultation on the participation and presence of all the forces in the government or the formation of a new government.

Dear compatriots: I am sure that you agree with me that positive developments have recently taken place in the country. Roads are open. Effective measures have been taken to collect weapons. A relatively safe security has been established in many regions of the country. It is worth mentioning that these measures have been on the top of the list of the government's programs from the very beginning of the formation of the Islamic State. The Islamic State not only acted as a source of encouragement for these measures, it took practical steps to implement and apply them and has had a strong part. The government approves any action and measure taken by any force or formation that results in ensuring peace, removing the causes of evil and corruption, and consolidating security and stability throughout the country.

Thus far the role and hands of the foreigners have been involved and have been sensed in the creation of disorder in the country's situation. It is necessary that under present conditions and in accordance with the demand of our people throughout the country, who are strongly against any type of foreign interference in their country, the latter should not provide any opportunity to any force or formation that others [foreigners] use as a means to fulfil their aims and aspirations about Afghanistan and to transform our country into a focus of disorder and

insecurity. The people of Afghanistan will give a stern rebuff to such actions and to such individuals.

It is an undeniable fact that the world moves fast toward progress. In Afghanistan too new conditions have appeared. It is necessary that, with solidarity and under the glorious banner of Islam and in step with the Islamic sovereignty of the country, all the forces should take effective and timely actions that enable the free, historic, united, and Islamic Afghanistan to take strong and firm steps toward progress and advancement. The possibilities, resources, and means should not be wasted. Advantages should be taken from each opportunity to promote the people's tranquillity, reconstruction, and the socioeconomic development of the country.

In a country where Islamic is sovereign, fighting is not lawful. Instead of war and hostility, all thoughts, actions, and efforts should be directed toward unity and solidarity, fraternity and brotherhood, and glory for the country. The Islamic State is ready for any type of cooperation in this regard, even flexibility and sacrifices.

I once again congratulate you all on the arrival of 'Id al-Fitr. I hope Almighty God will make our country a focus of peace, fraternity, and trust for all who inhabit it. I wish our people can become free from the threat of war and insecurity and live in peace, understanding, friendship, and pride. Success comes from God.

[signed] Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

India

Swedish Bofors Said Bidding To Sell Weapons

95AS0231A Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
21 Jan 95 p 7

[Article by Alfred De Tavares: "Bofors Making Fresh Bids To Sell Weapons to India, Says Minister"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Stockholm, Jan. 20—The controversial Swedish arms manufacturer Bofors is "making a new effort to sell weapons to India", according to a senior Swedish Minister here.

The External Trade Minister, Mr Mats Hellstrom, said in Parliament that Bofors did not require any new licences to sell material to India.

He said: "So far as India is concerned, a licence was granted during my incumbency. It is not customary to make public every single decision. However, Parliament is provided an annual report, along with the specifications of the weapons export to the various countries."

Mr Hellstrom's statement was interpreted here as the official lifting of the political embargo on weapons sale to India, in force since the bribes scandal broke out in connection with the sale of Howitzers to the Rajiv Gandhi Government in 1987.

The Minister categorically stated: "No major event has occurred that necessitates a suspension of the ongoing agreements (with India), nor is there any hindrance to the completion of (sale of spare parts, etc.) the system already delivered."

However, he added, neither India nor Pakistan could be considered suitable clients for the supply of Swedish war material.

The chief of information at Bofors in Karlskoga, Mr Anders Florenius, corroborated the Minister's statement, saying, "It is true that we have received a renewed licence to sell weapons to India. We have four cannons from which the Government of India may choose."

He added, "We also have the permission of the Swedish Government to subcontract the manufacture of our latest, state-of-the-art cannon to the Polish company Huta Stalowa Wola."

"If India buys this gun, it will be mounted on an India-manufactured T-72 tank, developed with Czech collaboration", he said.

Mr Florenius said the Polish-made cannon would be almost identical to the Howitzer 70 purchased earlier and that they could easily be manufactured in Karlskoga.

He added, "We have every desire to continue to do business with India. If we succeed in this enterprise it will, in every way, be of positive significance to us."

"The prospective Indian order is even larger than the one carried out in 1987. It is between 120 and 200 field guns", he added.

Asked if Bofors would take any step to avoid the problems the company faced during the 1987 deal, he said, "I think we have learnt a lot from our experience."

Mr Hellstrom, meanwhile, said he "saw the emerging policy of the Swedish Government on the export of armaments as far more restrictive than earlier policies".

However, the Minister said he would refrain from granting the Swedish weapons industry a positive blanket directive. "Each and every application for weapons export, will have to be considered on an individual basis and against the background of the situation currently obtaining (in the region)."

"At the same time all the other guidelines in force must be fulfilled", Mr Hellstrom said. "Among other factors blatant and massive violations of human rights must be absent."—India Abroad News Service

HAL To Set Up Mirage-2000 Service Center

BK0303060595 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The public sector Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, HAL, will set up a specialty center

for maintenance of the French Mirage-2000 fighter aircraft. The HAL chairman, Mr. R.N. Sharma, told newsmen in Bangalore that this forms part of HAL's effort to provide repair and maintenance facilities for the aircraft procured by the Indian Air Force. Stating that it will give HAL a big international market, he said two countries in the region who have Mirage-2000 planes have expressed their desire to utilize HAL's new facility. Mr. Sharma said HAL has signed an agreement with Dassault Aviation of France which produces Mirage-2000 for approval as an authorized service center. Over eight crore rupees would be invested for the purpose. A HAL spokesman said in Bombay that the company has also qualified as a supplier of major hardware for Boeing jetliners.

Russia To Supply First of 7 Cryogenic Blocks

BK0203144795 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Russia will supply this year the first of seven cryogenic booster blocks to the Indian Space Research Organization [ISRO]. The blocks are to be used for ISRO's Geostationary Satellite Launch Vehicle—GSLV. The Russian news agency, ITAR-TASS, reports from Moscow that under the modified version of the deal, Russia will supply two additional cryogenic booster engines free of charge to ISRO as compensation for refusing to transfer the cryogenic technology.

Tariff on Indo-Japanese Bilateral Trade Reduced

95AS0206A Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE in English 8 Jan 95 p 9

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, Jan. 7—A nine-member Japanese delegation led by Mr Ryutaro Hashimoto, Minister of International Trade and Industry, called on the Commerce Minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, here on Saturday. During the discussions, Mr Mukherjee stressed the need to exploit the vast potential for expanding Indo-Japanese bilateral trade.

Mr Mukherjee said the interest shown by the Japanese delegations, both at the government and the business level, was very encouraging. He said that the tariff rates had been reduced substantially and the government was committed to further reducing tariffs as per the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement. "The process of economic reforms was irreversible," he said.

Japan is one of India's principal international trading partners. However, India's share in Japan's global trade remains below one percent. There has been a steady growth in Indian exports to Japan in the last five years. Imports from Japan have also grown but at a slow pace.

Iron ore, shrimps and diamonds dominate Indian exports to Japan accounting for around two-thirds of India's total exports to Japan. The other items in the export basket are cashew, and sesame seeds; raw cotton, leather and leather goods, processed minerals, drugs, pharmaceuticals and chemicals; non-ferrous metals and textiles.

Our imports from Japan consist of machinery items including electrical machinery, machine tools, transport equipment, project goods, iron and steel, and chemicals. India's exports to Japan amounted to Rs 54,822.1 million in 1993-94 compared to Rs 41,528.8 million in 1992-93. Imports from Japan amounted to Rs 47,489.2 million in 1993-94 compared to Rs 40,809.7 million in 1992-93.

PTI adds: The Japanese minister, Mr R Hashimoto, called on the Prime Minister, Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao, and expressed his country's appreciation for India's ongoing economic reforms.

Mr Hashimoto told Mr Rao that Japan, for the first time, would participate as a partner-country in the 1997 India International Trade Fair, where it would be possible to show Japan's contribution, an official release said here.

He also referred to steps taken by Japan to increase credit insurance coverage and improve the terms of the coverage.

The Prime Minister expressed happiness that Japan was responding to these reforms and hoped that there would be much greater Japanese investment.

Japan To Provide Loan for 12 Major Projects

BK0303042495 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Japan will provide a loan of about 4,000 crore rupees to finance 12 major projects in India. The loan will be provided by the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) of Japan. It will cover six power, two transportation, and four environmental projects, including water supply, sewerage, and forestry schemes.

The loan agreement was signed in Tokyo earlier this week between OECF officials and the Indian Embassy. The package is the largest loan commitment from the OECF since 1976 when it granted the first loan to India.

Government Sets Economic Reform Agenda

95AS0224A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 13 Jan 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, January 12—Speedy reforms in banking, insurance, telecommunications and other infrastructure sectors, privatisation of non-core public sector enterprises and new labour legislation will be central to the future course of the Rao government's economic policies.

There will also be "concomitant action" to ensure that the benefit of reforms flows evenly across the country and to all sections of the society.

This agenda for reforms has been set at the highest level of the government following the recent debacle of Congress in the state assembly elections and the criticism of reforms from both within and outside the party. Cabinet

secretary Surendra Singh has just despatched a note to secretaries in key economic ministries informing them of the agenda for action.

The core group of secretaries on economic matters has been asked to chalk out the new economic strategy by taking into account recent criticism that the benefits of reforms have not spread among all sections across the country and that the implementation has been tardy.

Mr Singh has also drawn attention to the complaint that the reforms have not tackled core problems of the economy and the philosophy of the reforms have not trickled down to the states.

The core group of secretaries has been asked to discuss the role of the states in carrying forward reforms. Significantly, it has suggested that the group should discuss "enforcement of reforms" at the state level if the states cannot be induced to adopt them.

Also, positive directions are required on doing away with rules and regulations wherever possible and eliminating arbitrary powers of the inspectors.

Reduction in multiplicity of taxes and controls, improvement of infrastructure and law and order in close association and co-operation of states have also been underlined.

The cabinet secretary has referred to the complaint that the civil service is yet to be "attuned to the spirit of reforms." He has stated that at lower levels of the bureaucracy, there is still resistance to change.

Various criticisms of the economic reforms introduced in July 1991 have also been listed. These are: the pace of reforms has slowed down, implementation on the ground has been tardy and the benefits have not been commensurate with the expectations. While the approval mechanism has been speeded up, the post approval processes have changed little.

The cabinet secretary noted that various government departments had earlier reviewed laws and regulations with a view to eliminating reluctant procedures and reducing delays. Brain-storming sessions had also been organised at the level of chief secretaries to speed up simplification of procedures and acquisitions, export promotion, etc. However, much remained to be done.

The cabinet secretary's note is being viewed in light of recent pronouncements of the Prime Minister, Mr Narasimha Rao has said that despite the election debacle in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, the direction and course of reforms would remain unchanged. There would be no backtracking on reforms, he had declared at a recent international business conference in Calcutta earlier this month. However, he had assured the business community that as India proceeded with reforms, "shortcomings, wherever they are seen, will be removed."

Public Survey Reveals 'Broad Support' for Reforms

BK0303091095 Delhi THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 3 Mar 95 p 12

[Report by K. Balakrishnan and Gouri Chatterjee: "Broad support for carrying economic reforms further"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, March 2—"Structural adjustment with a human heart". This is the commitment that India has tried to introduce in the draft declaration of the forthcoming World Social Development Summit, according to Mr K.R. Venugopal, who led the Indian delegation to the preparatory committee meetings.

A public opinion survey conducted for The Times of India on the economic reforms in India finds that while there is broad support for the reforms to be carried further, a majority feels that the benefits so far have not reached the poor and there is need for the government to increase spending on social welfare programmes targeted at the poor.

The opinion poll was conducted for The Times of India by MODE, a leading market research organisation, among 1,532 men and women of voting age with around 250 in each of the six metros of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore and Hyderabad.

Seventy per cent of those polled were in favour of continuing with the reforms programme. Significantly the highest support comes from Madras (85 per cent), Hyderabad (82 per cent) and Calcutta (72 per cent), all of them cities in prominent non-Congress-ruled states.

Our respondents were asked about the effects of the reforms in the marketplace. The verdict is that the reforms have brought more competition (89 per cent feel so), more products and easy availability (68 per cent), but a significant majority (73 per cent) feel the reforms have not brought lower prices.

As to the effects on the economy, on the positive side 57 per cent feel incomes have gone up, 59 per cent feel the general standard of living has improved, and 68 per cent perceive an improvement of India's image abroad. The negative side, however, is that the majority (73 per cent) feels inflation has gone up.

On jobs, the perception is divided, with 46 per cent saying jobs have gone up and 49 saying they have gone down.

Who has benefited from the reforms? The verdict is clear on this: among the sections who have benefited 'greatly' are the rich (so say 82 per cent of the respondents), "the foreign companies (79 per cent), businessmen and traders (69 per cent) and politicians (79 per cent). The middle class has benefited 'somewhat' according to 55 per cent, and 'not at all' according to 34 per cent. The poor have benefited 'not at all' say 58 per cent, while 35 per cent feel they have benefited 'somewhat'.

Eight-three per cent of the respondents feel that the government should increase spending on welfare programmes of the poor. Significantly, however, the opinion is that providing rice or wheat at Rs 2 a kilogram may not be the best way to do it; while 48 per cent favour the cheap grain scheme, an equal number are against it.

Give Reforms a Human Face

Question	Yes	No	Can't Say (percent of respondents)
1. Should reforms be carried further?	70	24	6
2. Should government increase spending on social welfare programmes for the poor?	83	15	2
3. Should government provide rice/wheat at Rs. [rupees] 2 a kg?	48	48	4

Effects of economic reforms

In the Marketplace	Yes	No (percent of respondents)
More competition?	89	8
More products, easy availability?	68	29
Better quality?	60	35
Lower prices?	22	73

The Economy

	Gone up	Gone down
Inflation	73	21
Incomes	57	37
Jobs	46	49
Standard of living	59	34
India's image abroad	68	22

Who Has Benefitted?	Greatly	Somewhat	Not at all
The rich	82	12	3
The poor	4	35	58
The middle class	9	55	34
Foreign companies	79	12	3
Businessmen/traders	67	24	5
Politicians	79	11	4

Editorial Supports Government Debt Policy

BK0203102195 Delhi THE PIONEER in English
2 Mar 95 p 8

[Editorial: "Prudent debt management"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Government's announcement of new guidelines to govern fresh external commercial borrowings need to be welcomed as a measure of abundant caution, even if the level of the country's foreign exchange reserves at the moment suggest that such a step may have been unnecessary. In fact, what is particularly laudatory about the timing of the move is that it has been made when there are no obvious compulsions or indications of any impending crisis vis-a-vis the external sector. This also indicates that, whatever the difficult pronouncements on the issue in public may be, the Government does believe that the Mexican crisis may have some lessons for India. More importantly, it is prepared to act on that belief. To the extent that deeds ultimately speak louder than words, the new guidelines should placate those who have been dissatisfied with the Government's seemingly dismissive attitude toward suggestions that India faces similar risks as Mexico did.

It is true that the new guidelines effectively raise the national ceiling \$3.5 billion on external commercial borrowings by Indian companies fixed earlier, since that figure has already been exceeded and further borrowings have not been ruled out. However, what the guidelines seek to ensure while raising the ceiling is that any further borrowings will be more in tune with the sort of external debt profile that would be acceptable to the Government. This has been addressed by two specific aspects of the guidelines. The first of these is the stipulation that where the foreign loans form part of the financing for an infrastructural projects, they will be given a priority. This attempt to ensure that additions to the country's external debt are done preferentially in cases where they also address an accepted socio-economic priority, rather than in areas which may not be consider necessary or even desirable is a step in the right direction.

The second measure taken by the Government is to stipulate that foreign loans of over \$15 million will be approved only if the maturity periods are of even years or more and or loans of smaller magnitudes. The minimum maturity period would be three years. This is clearly to shift the profile of the country's external debt increasingly away from short-term borrowings to those of longer durations. Such a step would in any case be desirable, but is particularly so given not only the Mexican crisis, but perhaps more significantly India's decade. While economists of different shades may not agree on many issues related to the reforms, there would be none among them who would question the need for minimising the component of short-term debt in the country's overall external debt. The increasing contribution of short-term debt through the late 1980s and early part of the current decade was certainly a crucial factor in precipitating the crisis of

1991 and it would be preferable to err on the side of caution in preventing a recurrence.

Reserve Bank Head Speaks on Economic Policy

95AS0235A Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
20 Jan 95 p 18

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bhopal, Jan. 19—The Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, Dr C. Rangarajan, has said that economic reforms initiated in 1991 have already begun yielding results. Pointing out that the growth rate was expected to exceed 5 per cent in 1994-95, Dr Rangarajan said that the process of "adjustment" to the new economic policy was now coming to an end.

The RBI [Reserve Bank of India] Governor, however, admitted that the steady rise in prices due to the persistence of inflationary pressures had caused concern. "We expect to bring down the rate of inflation to a level between eight per cent and nine per cent by the end of this financial year," he said.

He was speaking to reporters here today, a day after he addressed a joint session of the Academy of Administration and the Federation of Madhya Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

PTI [Press Trust of India] adds: The RBI Governor has said that it would be wrong to say that the new economic policy made a total shift towards reliance on market.

In a written 14-page address last evening at a joint session organized by the Academy of Administration and the Federation of Madhya Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the RBI Governor said that there was nothing in the new economic policy which took away the role of the State or the public sector in the system.

Dr Rangarajan said that the thrust of the new economic policy was towards creating a more competitive environment in the economy as a means to improve the productivity and efficiency of the system.

What is sought to be achieved is an improvement in the functioning of the various entities whether they be in the private or public sector, by injecting an element of competition, Dr Rangarajan said.

He said that despite fiscal constraints, all efforts had been made to retain the allocations for programmes aimed at alleviating poverty and added that a larger allocation for social infrastructure programmes should become possible as the economy picked up in the coming years.

The RBI Governor said that all available indicators pointed to a substantial improvement in the overall economic performance during the current financial year.

Mr Rangarajan said that this assessment was based on the encouraging performance of industries during the

first five months, the expected increase in farm output and the continued high level of activity in the services sector.

As a result, the real GDP growth in 1994-95 is expected to exceed five per cent, he said.

The RBI Governor said that the Kharif foodgrains production, according to available indicators, was likely to be around 102.0 million tons as against 99.6 million tons in the preceding year.

Dr Rangarajan said that assuming the Rabi output to be at last year's level of 83.00 million tons, the total foodgrains production during 1994-95 could be placed at 185.0 million tons.

He said that the current financial year had so far been characterized by continued high procurement of foodgrains and pointed out that as a consequence, the stocks of foodgrains were high at 31.37 million tons at the end of October 1994 as against 22.78 million tons a year ago.

The RBI Governor said that the most encouraging feature of the turnaround in the industrial sector was the impressive performance of the manufacturing sector which recorded a growth of 8.1 per cent in April to August 1994 as compared with 2.3 per cent in the corresponding period last year.

A more significant aspect was the sharp increase in the output of the capital goods sector by 20.0 per cent in contrast to a decline of 9.7 per cent during April to August 1993, Dr Rangarajan said.

He said that the performance of the infrastructure industries continued to look up with a higher growth rate of 7.4 per cent during April to October 1994 as compared to 5.2 per cent during last year.

The RBI Governor said that among the infrastructure industries, saleable steel, cement, petroleum crude and petroleum refinery products registered an improved outturn whereas electricity and coal decelerated.

It appears that the major segments of the Indian industry which had to go through a process of adjustment as a consequence of changes in policies had been able to make the necessary adjustment, Dr Rangarajan said.

He said that it should be possible for the overall industrial sector to record a growth of around eight per cent during 1994-95 which would be closer to the trend rate of eight per cent for industrial production achieved during the eighties.

The RBI Governor said that India had come a long way from the crisis years of 1990-91 when the foreign currency assets had fallen to as low as \$1 billion.

Today, the foreign currency assets of the Reserve Bank of India, Dr Rangarajan said, stood at around \$19.4

billion and pointed out that this perhaps was the single most important aspect of the turnaround in the Indian economy.

He said that the economic reforms had already started yielding results which, according to him, was indicated by the improvement in the balance of payments position and the maintenance of growth rate of the economy at a reasonable level.

Columnist Rejects Economists' Statement

BK0203125595 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 2 Mar 95 p 11

[From the "Ecomment" column by Jairam Ramesh: "The Raj quartet and more"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Twelve distinguished economists and one retired civil servant have criticised the government's economic reforms programme. The 13 are the usual suspects, except Dr K N Raj, who had advocated steel decontrol way back in 1963, and just four years ago had, in an interview with FRONTLINE, unequivocally supported Dr Manmohan Singh, Dr Arun Ghosh, the father of the cement decontrol, also figures in the list. The list does not contain names that might have been expected like Dr A Vaidyanathan, who apparently was asked, but refused to sign the statement.

The statement will, no doubt, be dismissed by the government as the ideological fulminations of a geriatric set, who refuse to see emerging national and global realities. It would be a pity, for the statement hits the bulls-eye on many issues.

First, the statement is absolutely bang-on on the issue of inflation. The cumulative inflation in the last four years has been the highest since the Second World War. Growth is up, deficits are down but prices continue to rise inexorably. Some in the government believe that this is inevitable and that government can do little to control prices in the short term. These arguments are wrong. The government can do much. It can launch a massive dehoarding drive. It can use the burgeoning forex reserves to import essential commodities in time. It can resort to open market sales of its record 30 million tonne food stocks to bring down prices. It can be tough on the issue of DA [Dearness Allowance] and bonus as Mrs Gandhi was in 1974 and 1975.

Second, the statement is absolutely right in drawing attention to the total lack of transparency in decisions in the critical infrastructure sectors. This is hurting both public and private investment in areas like oil, power, telecom and surface transport. Some of the high-profile decisions that have been taken are atrocious and have been taken in the face of opposition from the finance ministry.

Third, the statement rightly draws attention to the neglect of the public sector. Disinvestment to meet fiscal deficits targets is no strategy of reform. The government

has moved from blind pro-public sector to anti-public sector policy. The net result is that even good companies like Bhel NTPC [National Thermal Power Corporation] and ONGC [Oil and Natural Gas Commission] are suffering.

Finally, the economists should be supported for their call to raise investment levels. With all the efficiencies, we just cannot aspire to a 8-10 per cent rate of growth if the rate of investment hovers around 25-26 per cent of GDP. Foreign savings can at best contribute 3-5 per cent of GDP. This means that domestic savings have to be somewhere close to 30 per cent of GDP so as to make our investment rates comparable to that in East Asia.

But having said this, the economists are strangely silent on many areas. They do not say anything on the issue of subsidies and cost recovery. Are they, or are they not for increasing irrigation charges and power tariffs? Surely they know that the main reason why public investment in agriculture has declined is because subsidies have ballooned. The economists rightly castigate the Centre but there is not a word on the need for fiscal discipline and correction in states.

The economists do not point out that our savings data is suspect and measurement methods are outdated. Further, savings are low mainly because public sector savings are low. In our political economy, privatisation is the only way of increasing returns from the public sector. They do not suggest any market friendly measure to increase savings. The economists bemoan the prevalence of corruption. The economists focus on market failure but sidestep the more pernicious phenomena of government failure.

Globalisation is indeed full of risks and pitfalls. But it offers many opportunities, which will help the poor and create new jobs. The economists do not recognize that it is domestic policy that is constraining growth like in textiles and agriculture. They also over-estimate the room for manoeuvre that we have in today's world. And they do not draw the implications, for both growth and equity, of continuing with pre-1991 policies.

Cussedly, the economists do not give any credit whatsoever for the achievements in the last four years. Apart from the impressive build-up in forex reserves, of which just about 25 per cent would be "hot" money, the volume of short term debt has been reduced drastically to just about \$3.6 billion. Exports are maintaining a healthy rate of growth. Banks are showing healthy profits. Business confidence is at an all time high. The upward drift in the fiscal deficit has been arrested. Outlays on rural development have been hiked by a record 100 per cent in just two years. NSS [National Savings Scheme] data do not show a worsening quality of life in rural India.

The statement is right in understanding the importance of tackling the internals. But it errs in viewing internal and external sector reforms as a sequential process. It is

actually a simultaneous process. The statement could have helped by being more than just a litany of some what familiar woes. And unfortunately it sees as to make the finance minister the target while ignoring the real villains—politicians and political parties.

Center's Plan To Curb Inflation Described

95AS0215A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 31 Dec 94 pp 1, 13

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, December 30—An anti-inflationary package to limit the rate of inflation as measured by the wholesale price index (WPI) to a single digit for the current financial year and to keep it within 6 to 7 percent has been drawn up by the government.

It has been decided at the highest level that instead of populist measures that could upset the government's fiscal discipline, a reasonable price stability in the last quarter of 1994-95 and 1995-96, which is the election year, will be politically more rewarding. The attack on the price front will be two-pronged.

The first is to control the money supply through open market operations by the Reserve Bank, top level official sources said. But this will not be enough as a tight monetary policy would only slow down the average growth in prices at the macro level.

The attack on the price front would also have to be launched at the micro level, meaning that measures would have to be taken to prevent prices of primary articles which enter the consumers baskets of agricultural labour and industrial workers from rising. Thus, with over 31 million tonnes of foodgrains as buffer stock, Food Corporation of India will continue selling both wheat and rice in the open market beyond January 1995, at reduced prices to reverse the inflationary expectations in the open market.

The national dairy development board which is importing palmolein and vegetable oil at a concessional import duty of 20 percent is planning imports of over one lakh tonnes for next year for its market intervention operation. It has also been proposed to expand the list of items to be distributed through the public distribution system. No decision has been taken as yet, as its financial implications are still to be examined.

The finance ministry has strongly argued in favour of easing the virtual ban on imports of consumer goods. The negative list for imports is expected to be pruned sharply. Easier imports at a reasonable level of duty will not only make the domestic manufacturers competitive, but will also provide a benchmark beyond which prices cannot rise.

Easier imports will increase the demand for hard currencies and reduce the pressure on the exchange rate of the rupee from going up. It will also reduce money supply and act as a deflationary instrument.

Finance ministry officials say that the 10.02 percent annual inflation rate for the week ended December 10 in terms of WPI is due to liquidity overhang caused by the high fiscal deficit of 1993-94 and the rise in foreign exchange reserves presently at \$19.5 billion. The rise in procurement prices as also the rise in the bank credit to the non-food sector as a result of the RBI's [Reserve Bank of India] credit policy for the busy season have also played a role.

Thus the demand pressure caused by money supply growth countered the seasonal trend normally experienced in November-December when prices tend to fall. From April 1 to November 11 this year, the growth of money supply was significantly higher at 13.4 percent as compared with 10 percent in the corresponding period of last year. But this was neither due to the growth in net bank credit to government, nor due to RBI's net credit to the central government, but due to a sharp increase in bank credit to the commercial sector and foreign exchange assets of the banking sector.

Finance ministry sources hope that since there are three months left for the current financial year to end, the anti-inflationary package will be effective enough to bring down the annual inflation rate to a single digit. The inflation rate for the first ten months of the financial year from April 1 to December 10 has been 7.1. It is unlikely that for the year as a whole, the rate will touch 10 percent.

BJP Manifesto Warns Against GATT

95AS0238A Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE in English 17 Jan 95 p 9

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, Jan. 16—The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] on Monday warned that the problems of economic reforms would multiply as a result of India signing the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and the common man would be crushed under the weight of rising prices.

"The distorted priorities of the government in the economic field, its wrongly sequenced economic programmes which make the rich richer and the poor poorer and its complete surrender to the international financial institutions and multi-nationals have created more problems than they have solved," the BJP manifesto for the forthcoming round of Assembly elections stated.

Releasing the manifesto here on Monday, the BJP president, Mr L. K. Advani, described the Assembly polls in the six States as a "mini-general election" and a "crucial point" in political history of India.

The nine-page statement said, "corruption of massive and unprecedented dimensions stalks the corridors of powers and taints the establishment from top to bottom." Describing the Congress and other political parties as "promoters of corruption, crime, and vote

bank peddlers in the name of minorities" it said the BJP stood for putting an end to all these and establishing the rule of law.

The manifesto touched on various issues such as vote-bank peddling, minorityism, corruption and country's security threats and asked the people to assert themselves to preserve the honour and dignity of *Bharat mata*.

The party promised to curb crime, give high priority to education and public health, and improve the standard of life of the weaker sections, the kisans, the workers, women and the youth. It also promises to provide shelter and employment to all.

Meanwhile, a delegation of the Bhartiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) met the President, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, and submitted a memorandum about the infiltration from Bangladesh into India. The delegation constituted Ms Uma Bharati, MP [Member of Parliament] and BJYM president, Mr K. L. Sharma, MP, and Mr Ravi Shankar Prasad, vice-president, among others.

Article Views Challenges for Rao

BK0103150195 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 20 Feb 95 p 15

[Article by P. Raman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The backlash of the economic reform threatens to be much more severe than anticipated. Only three months ago, the prime minister had put up a valiant fight against N.T. Rama Rao's [chief minister of Andhra Pradesh] poll-eve populism. Electoral compulsions have since become sharp enough to give a fright to the ruling party.

This is the most charitable explanation one can give for Narasimha Rao's promise of a package of schemes to aid weaker sections. Whatever the explanation, this marks a retreat from the brave new world of economic discipline. In 1991-92, Narasimha Rao adopted 'soft Hindutva [revival of Hinduism]' to neutralise the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and reservation for the backward classes to survive the Mandal onslaught on Congress (I) vote banks. Some such compromise is emerging now too.

The sudden change in the political mood should disturb all those who were hopeful of the reforms heralding an era of industrial upsurge. Optimists might still say that Rao was only making some cosmetic changes in the rural schemes. But the kind of forces that are coming together—directly or indirectly—should convince one that the opposition groups and anti-globalisers are aiming to overturn the new economic policy.

A few aspects of this development call for special attention. First, it will be a folly if one fails to notice the sudden change during the course of the last three months in the very nature and content of the anti-reform sentiment. Rama Rao's Rs. [rupees] 2 per kg rice offer has

only been a manifestation of the emerging anti-reform backlash. Most probably, Rama Rao himself had launched it as a hit-or-miss vote winner. It was so impressive that the Andhra PCC [Pradesh - State—Congress Committee] leaders had pleaded with Rao to include the scheme in the Congress (I) manifesto too.

Obviously, to avoid getting into the trap of competitive populism, Narasimha Rao had curtly refused. Such subsidies were not in tune with the concept of 'no free lunch' principle, on which the Rao-led reforms turned. The prime minister's faith in reform made him fight back populism by a patient exposition of the ill-effects of unproductive subsidies. His address to rural audiences in Andhra Pradesh seemed really convincing. But in the process, the prime minister also opened the reform process wider for the critics.

That paved the way for converting the election into a full-fledged debate on not only the various aspects of economic reform, but issues like nationalism, self-respect, consumerism and cultural invasion. By the time campaign began for the February-March elections in six states, workers were ready to put across party lines to semi-literate and illiterate millions. Those who return from the field say that villagers really believed that MNCs [multinational corporations] would thrust their packed beef food on all Indians as the price for foreign aid.

This may be an exaggeration. But people do seem to believe several fancy interpretations of GATT, PSU [public sector undertaking] disinvestment, and opening of the service sector. Election speeches by the opposition groups ranging from the BJP to Naxalites harp on invasions of various kind. They talk of Congress (I) 'looting' the poor to give profits to foreign firms. Corruption is being described as a part and parcel of reforms.

The cumulative impact of all such campaigns has been a wide gulf between the uneducated poor and the informed public. It is going to be extremely difficult to remove the impact of such propaganda among millions in rural India. Isolated efforts by certain unimaginative state leaders has only further complicated the issue. For instance, in Gujarat, election crowds were told of the coming prosperity on TV. But the local BJP workers were quick to convert this to sow the seeds of jealousy among the poor about the rich getting richer.

Thus, once the scope of the debate was widened, state Congress (I) leaders realised they were helpless. They are now either avoiding the issue altogether or giving assurances to the crowds about persuading the Centre to revise policies. Incidentally, such assurances tend to further confirm the people's sentiments against reforms.

Incidentally, the only defender steadfast on reforms has been Sharad Pawar [chief minister of Maharashtra]. His analogy of Maharashtra being made a prosperous Singapore went well with the crowds in the final stages. As the campaign wore on, BJP leaders could effortlessly punch

holes in Pawar's poll plank. Western India's Maharashtra-Gujarat belt is the best show-case of the industrial boom under liberalisation and globalisation. It is logical that this region should also be the strongest defender of reform.

All this of course will push Narasimha Rao into a situation where he will have to either fight back with fury in defence of the reform or fall in line with the opponents. This is because yielding ground under the present anti-reform atmosphere in election states will mean further problems. Critics have already rejected his 'middle path' and 'human face' with contempt. With his last week's offer of expanded housing and loan schemes for the poor, Rao has already agreed to try the second option of resorting to his own brand of rural populism.

The problem is that such schemes alone would not bring votes for a ruling party. Our experience in the past three decades has been that it is not the benefits in physical terms or volume that determine a political party's support base.

Pockets of green revolution or the neo-rich are not necessarily pro-Congress or pro-reform. People always have a tendency to take such benefits for granted. Indira Gandhi's sway over the weaker sections was not due to the 20-point programme alone. Instead, it was the image of protector of the poor.

The bigger challenge for Rao will be from his own party. The pressures from the Congress ranks—even MPs—for 'transparency' on reform programmes is a reflection of this change of mood in states. At Tirupathi, Rao was able to get endorsement for the reform because euphoria was still supreme and party men thought reforms could be converted into votes. In the changed atmosphere, internal discussions at bigger fora like AICC (I) [All India Congress Committee-I] would be used by Rao's detractors in the party.

Rao's efforts for a consensus with the chief ministers on populist schemes are not going to yield any positive result. This is because of the confrontationist atmosphere created by internal challenges and the compulsions of the next Lok Sabha poll. The Left and BJP leaders assert that any such consensus should cover the entire reform package not subsidies alone. In fact, the BJP has now become more anti-reform than even the Left. Look at the official fortnightly 'BJP Today'. Every issue is full of anti-reform articles written by critics in India and abroad.

Exit Polls: Congress in Maharashtra, BJP in Gujarat

BK0303081395 Delhi THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 3 Mar 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, March 2—The congress party may scrape through with a majority in Maharashtra and the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] is likely to get a clear verdict in its favour in Gujarat,

according to a joint exit poll conducted by the fortnightly India Today and the market research agency MARG on polling days in the two states.

The results of an opinion poll conducted by the two organisations in Bihar and Orissa, where assembly elections are scheduled to be held later this month, show that the ruling Janata Dal [JD] may emerge as the single largest party in Bihar, while in Orissa it may scamper home with a substantially lesser majority than it did in 1990.

The exit poll, which covered 45,000 voters spread across 90 representative constituencies selected by psephologist Prannoy Roy in Maharashtra and Gujarat shows that the Congress is likely to win between 125 and 150 seats in the 288 member Maharashtra assembly for which elections were held last month. The BJP-Shiv Sena combine is likely to come second getting between 110 and 125 seats.

In Gujarat, the poll predicts that the BJP may win between 100 and 125 seats in the 182 member assembly. The findings of the exit poll as well as the opinion poll are being carried in the latest issue of the magazine.

The voting pattern, says a press release issued by the magazine, indicated that women, Muslims and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes came out "solidly" in support of the ruling Congress party in Maharashtra, while the BJP got the backing of the Brahmins and, "surprisingly, got a higher percentage of support from the Marathas than the Congress." The backward castes vote was split equally between the two parties.

According to the poll, chief minister Sharad Pawar has a big lead in the popularity ratings over Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray and BJP leader Gopinath Munde.

In Gujarat, the Patels and the Brahmins gave the BJP substantial backing, while the Muslims and the scheduled castes and tribes supported the Congress, says the poll. In the popularity ratings, BJP leader Keshubhai was way ahead of the others including Congress chief minister Chabildas Mehta.

The opinion poll covered 19,945 registered voters spread across 120 representative constituencies in Bihar and Orissa and was carried out between February 14 and 20. In Bihar, it showed that the JD and its allies with 25 per cent support is head of the Congress party by seven per cent and will emerge as the single largest group. But with the BJP and the Samata Party expected to corner many seats, the situation is heading for a hung assembly, says the poll.

In Orissa, the poll says although voters are discontented with the ruling JD, they do not appear ready to unseat it yet.

Influence of Chinese Communists on CPI-M Noted

95AS0210A Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
9 Jan 95 p 9

[Article by Mihir Mukherjee: "CPI(M) Finds Few Pot-holes on Chinese Road to Socialism"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The draft political resolution of the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist], which was finalized at the party's Central Committee meeting, held in Calcutta in the last week of December, praised China for adopting economic reforms compatible with its socialist structure. But a scrutiny of the resolution on economic policy, adopted at the 14th Central Committee meeting of the Chinese Communist Party, held on November 14, 1993, would reveal that it was anything but socialist.

In fact, in the 25-page document, reprinted in the October-December number of the CPI(M)'s [Communist Party of India-Marxist] theoretical journal, THE MARXIST, the words Marxism and Leninism have been mentioned only twice. There is no commentary on the Chinese economic policy in the CPI(M) journal.

The economic policy resolution of the Chinese Communist Party goes against some of the basic concepts of Marxism. Article 2 of the resolution says that everybody should be paid according to his work and not need. The same article also accepts the right to private property.

In Article 9 of the resolution, privately owned industries and non-Government business enterprises and foreign investment have been encouraged. In Article 4, no objection has been raised to setting up stock companies and share distribution, which will necessitate opening of stock exchanges. Recognition has been given to intellectual property rights and competition in the technology and information fronts have been welcomed.

The resolution suggests opening up coastal towns, central cities in the interior of the country and border areas to attract foreign investment. Students are to be encouraged to study and get training abroad with the proviso that they be induced to return home.

Left sources point out that Mr Jyoti Basu, prior to his announcement of the State's industrial policy on the floor of the West Bengal Assembly, had visited North Korea and China. They believe that Mr Basu was influenced and impressed by the Chinese economic policy. It is mentioned that at the CPI(M) Central Committee meeting, the party's general secretary, Mr Harkishen Singh Surjeet argued that China could afford to encourage foreign investment and favour GATT resolutions as the Government there was in total control of the economy, which was not the case with West Bengal.

Mr Basu's industrial policy got the support of the CPI(M) Central Committee. Even those who had reservations about the policy did not raise their voice at the

meeting. In the organizational elections, which had been completed up to the district level, preparatory to the 15th party congress, people in favour of Mr Basu's policy had been elected. Only in one zonal committee—in Tollygunge-Naktala—were critics of Mr Basu's policy able to secure the majority. But even then there is a chance of recounting of votes, held through secret ballot, because of the clamour raised by the pro-Basu group, led by Mr Prasanta Sur.

Iran

Khamene'i Tells U.S. 'Get Lost and Go Home'

LD0203183295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1102 GMT 2 Mar 95

[Speech by Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, supreme leader of the Islamic revolution, to senior military and government officials at the Imam Khomeyni Mosque in Tehran on 2 March—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Take a look at Islamic groups throughout the world and you will see what is worrying the enemies of Islam. Today the Americans, the world's Zionist circles, the major capitalist circles of the world, when they see the faith-seeking movement of the people, they see danger. And they call it fundamentalism. Of course, when they say fundamentalism, they don't mean going back to principles, going back to basic thoughts and values. That's not what they mean by the word fundamentalism. They mean backwardness, an infatuation with the past, and looking at issues with old spectacles. This is what they mean when they say fundamentalism. In other words, they use fundamentalism as an insult toward people, saying fundamentalists are backward and dogmatic.

They are the enemy, if the enemy does not insult one, well we should be surprised if they don't insult us. A stubborn enemy that has a massive propaganda loudspeaker at its disposal is not expected to do anything else, they are spending millions [currency not specified] on propaganda, you want them not to insult you? Well of course it does, and we are not surprised by this at all. But if one of our own believes this propaganda, now this is surprising. [passage omitted]

It is a very good thing that a nation should hold its head up and say that we want to be ruled by Islamic tenets. Governments, politicians, the intelligentsia, and all the activists among a nation should welcome such a thing.

However, some are frightened of this. A number of countries take an antagonistic attitude toward this phenomenon. We do not share their attitude. We say that this movement must be studied and identified; as a movement which in the present day can support and save Muslim nations. In this way, such a phenomenon must be accepted and acknowledged.

Nevertheless, the enemies will continue their grudge. When the Zionists want to say bad things about the Islamic republic, they call it an Islamic state. In their opinion such a phrase is an insult, whereas we are proud of it. We even take the modest approach and say that we still have some way to go before reaching the true Islamic state. We see this lofty end as a great aspiration, but they see it as a bad thing.

This hatred is expected from the Zionists who are full of grudges and enmity, and seek nothing but the material world—the Zionists who are ruthless, racist and antagonistic toward Muslims and mankind as a whole. How can you expect them to be happy about the Islamic state? It is only natural that they should hate it, but why should some Muslims dislike it?

From what I see on the stage of the Muslim world today I can say that Muslim nations have been awakened and they have now gradually liberated themselves from the prevailing sense of acute weakness and servitude, which had been imposed on them during a period of about 150 to 200 years. This is a great achievement indeed. It is in itself a cause for celebration.

Muslim nations have completely emancipated themselves from their feeling of inferiority complex toward the West. This is the key to the process of progress toward the zenith of spirituality.

In other words, first, nations have to find faith in themselves and get rid of the sense of inferiority. If nations start to believe in themselves and their capabilities, and if they stop looking up to some kind of master in the world—in the shape of some other foreign government or nation—then the way will be paved for progress.

However if, metaphorically speaking, like school children in the old days who had to ask the teacher's permission before uttering a single word, a nation constantly looks around to see what the Americans say and what will please and satisfy them—that is the Americans who have been trying to impose their desired order on the world but have failed and will continue to fail—then they will never get anywhere.

The Islamic morale has taken away the mentality of submission from [Muslim] nations. They have been awakened and have become believers relying on themselves. This is a great hope that can be observed.

It is the time for the Islamic governments to benefit from this morale among their nations. These governments should rely on their nations and stand behind these nations. By doing so they can negotiate with the major powers as partners or as rivals in equal terms, instead of giving priority to them [major powers].

You see today if an incident takes place anywhere in the world, the United States comes forward to challenge, saying: I must be here. When asked: Why sir?, she answers: My interests dictate that I must be present here.

Well, your interests make it necessary for you to be here, whereas the interests of the region dictate that you must get lost and go home. What are you doing here anyway?

[The United States says] I must remain in the Persian Gulf because my interests lie here. But the interests of the Persian Gulf require that you should not be here. However, she does not care about the interests of others. She gives priority to her own interests. This is the stance they have adopted today.

The day when the nations can look into each other's eyes and address one another as equals with equal rights, it would be fine. It should not be that the United States considers her own rights to be above all other nations. Such assumptions should not be made by any European country or major power. The nations should talk to each other, engage in trade and transactions, and exchange knowledge and culture, but in equal terms. That would be fine.

Today it can be seen that that spirit is gradually taking form among the nations. When we look at the Iranian nation that hope increases ten fold. Thank God, today, in the large Islamic, powerful country of ours—despite some appearances which our enemies try to enlarge—the main current of life is toward growth and excellence. The nation in Iran is cheerful; the nation is in the arena. The decisive sign [of that] is what you saw in the month of Ramadan. How they commemorated 20 Bahman [11 February, Revolution Day]; how they staged the al-Quds Day a short time [after Revolution Day] in Ramadan. How they welcomed loyally and gratefully the pure remains of our martyrs when they were brought back from the front. These factors indicate the cheerfulness of a nation. This nation is alive. [Crowd chants: "God is great," "Khamene'i is the leader," "Death to the anti-Islamic revolutionary," "Death to America," "Death to Britain," "Death to the hypocrites and Saddam," "Death to Israel"]

The nation is alive and in the arena and likes the authorities and trusts those policies which the officials are implementing. These [things] are tremendous, invaluable. And [the nation] believes itself to have responsibility in the state arena and participates in it. All those are valuable which, thank God, can be found in our country today and you can witness them.

And the officials work for the people with care. That is something that will be seen most clearly by a person who looks at it with the vision of a fair person. Of course the enemy says things. Don't listen to him. The authorities are in the arena today with utmost care as waves of problems are pressing from outside the country. They have stood fast and are resisting; as much as they can; as much as there is power in them for resistance and planning. We don't wish to say that officials in every corner of the country are infallible and that there are no limits to their capabilities. No. They stand fast to the extent of their power to think and make decisions. The same spirit that is in the people is found in them; because

they are part of the people; because they rely on the people; because they come from the people; they are in step with the people. This is a most proper and delightful atmosphere. It is what delineates the future for human beings. The future is a most hopeful one.

I can see some bright points on the horizon of this great nation's future. They are God's blessings. Among such blessings are this nation's morale and the solidarity that exists between the nation and the government and the selflessness of the officials in performing various tasks. [passage omitted]

You should be thankful for the unity and solidarity that exist between the nation and the government. This is a very dear blessing. You can see how the enemies' propaganda horns try to deny this. You saw how the hostile foreign radios denied the fact that you people took part in the huge demonstrations that you yourselves participated in. They denied that such a great event took place. That is indicative of their hostility. They cannot control themselves.

Last night the [Iranian] television reflected how [foreign] radios denied [that huge crowds took part in demonstrations] and also showed, once again, pictures of the huge crowd that took part in the rallies. That is a very good method. It shows how our enemies rely on illusions, lies, and the cover up of realities when they speak about us. That is one of God's blessings that our enemies are the way they are. You should be thankful for that. [passage omitted]

Khamene'i Delivers 'Id al-Fitr Sermon

LD0203140195 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 3 Mar 95

[Second 'Id al-Fitr prayers sermon by Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution, in Tehran on 2 March—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Today, the Islamic ummah should try to preserve unity, cohesion, and solidarity, as the term ummah suggests. Today, this great community has a duty to its esteemed prophet, savior, and teacher, to a person who as God's testimony among the ummah is the most popular personality. This duty is to preserve the honor and integrity of the Islamic ummah through unity and cohesion. This is the duty of the ummah today. [passage omitted]

Today, the enemies of Islam and the Islamic community are doing their best to pit the members of this community against each other. This is not peculiar to the present time, as the situation has been the same in the past. However, today, this dastardly mission of the enemies is being implemented through systematic thought and comprehensive planning. The reason for this is that they feel that the Islamic spirit is growing among Muslims, Islam has awakened hearts, and with our nation's great

revolution, arrogance has received a blow from Islam. This is why they want to create enmity in the Islamic community.

I want to invite our own dear nation, and all other Muslim nations anywhere in the world, to listen to this divine guidance and to heed the Koran's cry: Gather around the axis of God and do not disperse [Koranic verse].

America wants Muslim nations to be each other's enemies. You should therefore, with your unity, rub the nose of this arrogant power, which is intent on creating discord, in the dirt. [crowd chants in support]

At present, the enemies of the Islamic world want to achieve their goals at the expense of world Muslims. Right now, they want to make sure that the interests of the Palestinian nation are no longer represented by America's Zionist mercenaries in the region and the false state of Israel, but by Islamic states themselves. [sentence as heard] You should not allow this to happen. You should not allow the Palestinian nation and the other Muslim nations, as well as those who are seekers after truth and all alert and conscious governments, to stand on one side and say that Palestine should be taken out of the hands of the occupiers, while others on the opposite side, who merely want to make America happy, tend to speak in the interest of the usurper Israel and thereby break the hearts of the Islamic community, the Palestinian nation, and the seekers after truth. Why should such a thing be allowed to happen?

Today, members of the Islamic community should bring their hearts and minds closer. We, as the Iranian nation, which during the last 15 or 16 years has proved its power and might and its various capabilities, and we, as the officials of this country, have always extended, and continue to extend, the hand of friendship toward all Islamic nations. This is not because we are weak or feel that we need any one, but because the great nation of Iran has proved that, because of its inclination toward Islam, God has bestowed upon it virtues such as greatness, power, and honor. Praise be to God, today this nation is a great and proud nation. [crowd chants in support] This desire on Iran's part for friendship with all Islamic nations springs from Iran's will to create unity and solidarity in the Islamic world; it springs from the nation's regard for the interests of the Islamic community.

All the Muslims who today in some way or another feel the bite of arrogance's lashes on their bodies and souls—such as the nations of Palestine, Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir, and Lebanon, and other Muslim nations in Africa and Asia—are subjected to pain and suffering because of the lack of unity and solidarity in the Islamic community. If the Islamic community had enjoyed solidarity, none of these would have happened, and even if they had been made to happen, then they could have easily been dealt with. [passage omitted]

In conclusion, I would like to offer some prayers on the auspicious occasion of 'Id al-Fitr. I hope that God listens to these prayers favorably. [passage omitted]

God Almighty, we beseech You to destroy all the enemies of the Iranian nation and the great Islamic ummah. [crowd chants]

God Almighty, we ask You, in the name of Muhammad and his scion, to foil the conspiracies of all those who hatch plots against Iran, Iranians, and against all the Muslims of the world. [crowd chants]

God Almighty, we beseech You to uproot the ominous cancerous tumor of Israel and grant victory to the nations of Palestine, Chechnya, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kashmir, and all other Muslim nations across the globe. [crowd chants] [passage omitted]

Jannati Delivers Second Friday Prayer Sermon

LD0303114595 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0820 GMT
3 Mar 95

[Second Friday prayer sermon by Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, secretary of the Guardian Council, in Tehran—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] We have many difficulties. They were imposed on us by the war; eight years of war is no joke, it would drain any country. Apart from military difficulties and war damage, there are other difficulties caused by the enemy. They are bombarding the nation from every side. They clearly say that they have to fight Iran economically, politically, and culturally. This is a war and this is what they are doing. They do not let up even for a second.

Those of you who listen to the news, especially those bulletins which broadcast foreign news, or those who listen to alien radios can see what they are up to. They use any excuse to make a mountain out of a molehill, to make the people lose hope, give encouragement to the enemy, and present the picture that within the next few days the country will fall apart. From the way they speak, if someone is simple or is not familiar with their lies, he might think the country is going to fall apart either today or tomorrow.

They are engaging in propaganda against us in every way possible. One day they come and say Iran is preparing for war, Iran is threatening its neighbors, Iran is seeking nuclear weapons, and the rest. They do this to scare Iran's neighbors, to get their money off them, and to sell weapons to them. As you can see, this is happening to Kuwait—they are cooperating with each other in the military field—and to Saudi Arabia, as well as other countries. They keep selling weapons to them and land their forces in those countries. In the Persian Gulf the situation is as you can see. All of this is scaremongering; to say the only country that can frighten others is Iran is scaremongering. They say there is no threat from anywhere else, but Iran is dangerous; Russia is no longer dangerous, other countries, whether right-wing or left-wing, are not dangerous, only Iran poses a threat.

Then they use any excuse; sometimes they lie, sometimes they use an insignificant matter that might be true—to portray our economic situation in such a way that no one will dare to deal with us, give us credit, or renew a loan. They want to impose economic limitations on us.

They bring up some really minor issues that surprise me; for example this year, as last year, we did not invite foreign guests for the Ten Days of Dawn [revolution anniversary 2-12 February]. We did not think it was wise to invite them because we wanted to make some savings. Anyway, the philosophy that existed before which required us to invite foreign guests has not been around for the past two or three years. They came along, however, and said: The economic situation of Iran is bad—they did not invite foreign guests this year for the Ten Days of Dawn. I mean something as small and unimportant as this has become a big issue in their loudspeakers.

This economic crisis has affected many other places. You heard from the radio and television news that France intends to close six of its embassies and about a dozen of its consulates in various countries of the world. Well, this is because of France's financial situation, but you do not see them talking about this and saying that the bad economic situation has led France to do this. Because we did not invite foreign guests, they started a hue and cry. [passage omitted]

Then there are the economic sanctions and all the threats and pressures brought to bear on countries seeking to have economic ties with us. For example, just look at all the pressures they exert on Russia for the contract it has signed with us. This is the way they act.

So what must we do? This is where the Koranic edict applies; that is: No Muslim is a true Muslim if he fails to attend to the affairs of other Muslims [preceding Koranic verse in Arabic]. In other words, everyone from every walk of life must do something about this issue and do whatever he can. People should, moreover, be careful so as to not spread or strengthen the enemy propaganda.

People should take care so that they do not inadvertently act as a mouthpiece for the enemies and at the same time do something to dishearten the friends. One must be very careful.

All the achievements and all the services rendered so far must always be borne in mind. In view of all the ruins left by the war, all the reconstruction that has taken place in different forms must really be acknowledged and admired. [crowd chants in support] [passage omitted]

I also advise government organizations to make savings. We have repeatedly mentioned that our esteemed officials are doing their best to perform their duties well, but sometimes they undertake unnecessary expenditure which they should stop, particularly where foreign currency expenditure is concerned. Expenditure of foreign currency should be cut to the barest minimum. Our main

problem now is the problem of foreign currency. Therefore we should do our best to increase exports, insofar as it does not create domestic problems, so that we can attract foreign currency to solve our foreign currency problems. That is of course as long as it does not create major problems at home. [passage omitted]

I ask the Majles to pay precise attention when debating the budget bill. [passage omitted] I urge the Majles and other committees with supervisory power to scrutinize how the money is spent and ensure that expenditure is not in a confused state. Sometimes a law is properly drawn up and approved, but it is somehow wrongly implemented. [passage omitted]

There is an issue that has been much on my mind—sometimes I even ponder if it is a right thing to do or not, but I suppose it is a correct thing to do—I believe it would be useful to reveal the names of those who have committed big offenses. [crowd chants in support] [passage omitted]

Hashemi-Rafsanjani Reviews Achievements, Goals NC0303115595 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 26 Feb 95 pp 1-2

[FBIS Translated Text] In a sincere meeting with ABRAR's chief editor and members of the newspaper's editorial staff, the president stated: I want to leave behind me a flourishing Iran after my eight years in office.

Our correspondent reports that during the meeting, ABRAR's chief editor reported on the newspaper's activities during the past six months and said: ABRAR is an independent newspaper without any affiliation to any group.

He added: The method we have chosen is to refrain from annoying the people and the government. Of course this does not prevent us from commenting on the weaknesses and shortcomings in some of the institutions, because what the officials and the people want is for problems to be discussed and constructive and correct criticism to be made.

Then Hashemi-Rafsanjani stated: I mostly look at the headlines because I do not have too much time to read everything that is published in the press.

The president added: ABRAR is in a better position with its new management and you have decided to publish a good and reliable newspaper. I wish you success and hope that ABRAR will improve each day.

Our correspondent reports that the president answered questions put to him by the editorial staff.

The president was asked: Are you still a positive-thinking and optimistic person? Currently, such a special characteristic might be different from the spirit prevailing among some people in society. How should this gap be filled?

The president replied: I think that no real gap exists and that society is hopeful for the future. I am not in contact with society in the same way as you journalists are. But I see signs of optimism and hope in society.

Stating that there are people who have different views from the government in specific fields and that these people state their views on shortages and mistakes, the president said: By expressing their views, these people make the executive managers more careful about making up for possible shortcomings.

He added: Good work should be praised and mistakes too should be mentioned and solutions proposed so that pessimism is avoided.

The president stressed: If everyone expresses optimism, this will not create the necessary incentives for reconstruction. There should be criticism but, of course, constructive criticism. Only then will feelings not be hurt and will it be easy to tell right from wrong.

The president was asked: You have had serious responsibilities in four fields: the movement and the victory of the revolution, the legislative branch, the war, and the executive branch. Which one of these four did you like most and which one was the most difficult? We know that you undertook and accepted all these responsibilities as your duty.

The president said: Each one of these responsibilities was undertaken at a specific time and, frankly speaking, each one was demanding.

The legislative branch is what others chose for me. Our friends in the Islamic Republic Party and in the [Tehran] Militant Clergy advised that I head the Majles. I discussed the issue with the imam and the imam's final approval sealed my final decision to accept.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani added: The war coincided with my term in the Majles. I was not a military man. But the war was not something you could ignore. It was a heavy responsibility. There were two deputy speakers in the Majles. There were also the deputies. So things progressed. The war was very demanding.

The president added: I came to the executive branch on the advice of others and of course with the imam's agreement. All these duties were rewarding for me.

The president stressed: Iran lagged behind in infrastructural activities throughout history. My goal in the executive branch is to make up for this backwardness. The government's First Plan was my first attempt to overcome this weakness. Maybe this plan may not be considered ideal, but I am satisfied with it.

I think that in eight years, when I leave the executive branch, much fundamental and infrastructural work will have been done. Of course others will come and complete the work.

The president continued: We have chosen the correct path for the future. I want to leave a flourishing Iran behind me.

The president was asked: We see major and important activities in the list of Your Excellency's activities and decisions; they were difficult to achieve but Your Excellency fulfilled them. But the government and officials did not achieve favorable results in one area: "telling" of the national efforts that are being made for the country and reconstruction. Our people are less aware than the foreigners of the depth and extent of the Islamic Republic's efforts. (The foreigners get their information on this through various means, even through espionage and intelligence.) Does Your Excellency not deem it necessary to achieve this important national goal?

Hashemi-Rafsanjani answered: I accept this. Of course this is not a difficult task and should have been undertaken by a group of officials. I expected the mass media to do this. All these pages are published in the newspapers and we have all these tribunes from which to speak. But possibly there was no realistic approach. Hashemi-Rafsanjani added: I have recently thought of organizing something to this effect.

Of course most of my attention is paid to the revolution. I am a soldier of this revolution and I should try to record my service to the Islamic Republic in history.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani Opens First Rafah Supermarket

LD0203212295 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1900 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The first supermarket of the Rafah chain-store was inaugurated by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani in Tehran this afternoon. According to a Central News Unit report the store is one of the thousand supermarkets in the chain-store which the government is setting up to reform the distribution network.

The Rafah store in Tehran was set up through an investment by the Tehran municipality with a credit amounting to 10,000 million rials in a plot measuring 1.5 hectares. It has 6,000 square meters under construction and is situated in the southern flank of the Beyhaqi park-and-ride.

In this store for the first time the goods are presented by a mechanized system, are coded, and controlled by a computer and television system. There are nearly 12,000 varieties of essential goods on sale. Most goods are domestically produced. [passage omitted]

Khamene'i Appoints New Member to Guardian Council

LD0303084695 Tehran IRNA in English 0809 GMT 3 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 3, IRNA—The leader of the Islamic revolution, Grand Ayatollah 'Ali

Khamene'i in a decree issued here Thursday [2 March] appointed Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi as a new member of the Council of Guardians.

Ayatollah Hashemi would replace Ayatollah Moham-madi-Gilani who had announced his resignation from the Council of Guardians because of his new responsibility in the judiciary.

The leader also wished success for the new member and other members of the Guardians Council in accomplishing their tasks.

The Council of Guardians is responsible for endorsing all laws passed by the majles (parliament).

Oil Minister Reports on Petrochemical Industry

LD0103163895 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 1 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a cabinet meeting this morning, chaired by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh briefed the cabinet on the current status of the state's petrochemical production and supply, as well as the petrochemical industry projects that are being implemented.

According to his report, total petrochemical production during the past 11 months reached 6,918,803 tonnes, an increase of 35 percent compared to the previous year. The increased production in the Imam Khomeyni Port Petrochemical Complex was from about 1 million tonnes to 2 million tonnes and in the Arak Petrochemical plant from 62,000 tonnes last year to 440,000 tonnes in the current year [beginning 21 March 1994].

The report referred to five projects that became operational during 1373 [beginning 21 March 1994], one of which is a PVC [expansion unknown] unit at the Imam Khomeyni port with a capacity of 175,000 tonnes and a light polyethylene unit in the complex with a capacity of 100,000 tonnes.

According to the oil minister's report, exports totaled 240 million dollars during the past 11 months, and domestic petrochemical sales reached 788,000 millions rials. [passage omitted]

Six Oil Derricks Completed on Siri Oil Rigs

LD0103181795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 1 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Thanks to the efforts of our country's experts and engineers, the installation of six derricks has been completed on the Siri rigs. This is the first time that such derricks have been installed in Iran.

The installation of the derricks has increased the output of each of the region's oil wells by 30 percent and has made possible a foreign currency saving of 2 million dollars.

Ministry Official on Reports on Iranian-Israeli Talks

NC0303103295 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 23 Feb 95
p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday the Foreign Ministry spokesman refuted a doubtful allegation by the German FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE on indirect talks between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Zionist regime.

In an interview with ABRAR, Dr. Mohammad stated: With this effort and these empty allegations against the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Zionist regime is trying to hang a question mark over the genuine nature of World Jerusalem Day, a day on which the people in the world of Islam express their aversion toward the continuing occupation of the Muslims' first kiblah and toward the continuing torture and massacre of Palestinian Muslims by the Zionist occupying forces.

He added: We have repeatedly stated that we do not recognize the regime occupying Jerusalem and know nothing about the fate of the pilot to which the Zionist regime refers.

The Zionist regime claims that one of its planes was downed over Lebanese territory in the second half of the eighties and that its pilot, Ron Arad, is being kept in Iran.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman said: This issue has been placed on the agenda of some countries, such as India and Germany, which have been asked to demand that we release this pilot. But we are unaware of his whereabouts.

He added: In return, we have asked those countries that have been influenced by the false allegations by the Zionist regime to consider the fate of our diplomats who were taken hostage in 1980 and were taken to occupied Palestine.

Commenting on remarks by French Defense Minister Francois Leotard that Iran, together with Syria, Libya, and Iraq, is destabilizing the Middle East, the Foreign Ministry spokesman said: The main factor of instability in the Middle East is the Zionist regime. And we should not ignore the unrestrained intervention in the region by some foreign countries that support Israel.

Continuing his comments on the French defense minister, the informed source said: There are two reasons for this position. The first is that Leotard's remarks are linked with NATO chief Willy Claes, who considers Islam to be an enemy. And, since France's intervention in Algeria has harmed its prestige and its image as a defender of freedom, Paris is trying to interfere in Algeria and in other regional countries through NATO.

The second reason is that Leotard's comments are also linked with the French presidential elections, because

some sources believe that Leotard belongs to that faction that needs Zionist support to win.

Russian Duma Delegation Arrives for Talks

*LD0303085595 Tehran IRNA in English 0751 GMT
3 Mar 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 3, IRNA—A five member Russian delegation comprising experts and members of Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament arrived here this morning and was greeted by deputy foreign minister for education and research, Abbas Maleki.

The delegation is here at the invitation of the Foreign Ministry's Institute for International and Political Studies to take part in a two-day meeting to discuss bilateral relations.

The prospect of bilateral ties, the two countries' points of view on international issues, developments in Central Asia and crisis in Caucasus will be discussed in the meeting which is to be held on March 5-6.

Energy Minister, German Official Review Economic Ties

*LD0203111895 Tehran IRNA in English 1019 GMT
2 Mar 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 2, IRNA—The Iranian minister of energy, Bijan Namdar-Zangeneh, and director general of Germany's Economic Ministry Lorenz Schomerus, reviewed bilateral economic and industrial ties here thursday.

The two officials discussed promotion of economic ties between the two countries and prospect of mutual cooperation in the course of the second five-year economic development plan in Iran.

Schomerus is heading a German trade delegation which arrived in Tehran tuesday to discuss resumption of activities of Hermes insurance company in Iran.

Credit Insurance for Exports Reopened

*LD0203142995 Tehran IRNA in English 1350 GMT
2 Mar 95*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 2, IRNA—Director of the International Affairs Department of Germany's Economic Ministry, Lorenz Schomerus, said here last night that his country had reopened a limited credit insurance for exports to Iran.

Making the remark at a meeting of the Iran-Germany Chamber of Commerce and official industries, he noted that resumption of the coverage by Germany's state credit insurance company 'Hermes' would initiate positive developments in the two countries's ties.

He added that the German side and banks had agreed with resumption of the Hermes coverage and would abide by it, and expressed hope that Iran would commit itself to it as well.

Schomerus described the act as a step towards boosting of trade relations which would activate Iranian companies.

He referred to the presence of a remarkable number of German representatives in the gathering as an indicator of the fact that the economic and commercial activities between the two countries were based on long-term plans.

Saying that Germany was one of Iran's traditional trade partners and that the German firms were not afraid of rivals, the director hoped that opportunities would be provided in the second development plan for entrepreneurs of the two countries to expand cooperation.

Schomerus concluded by saying that Germany was negotiating with Iran on long-term continuous cooperation and noted that attracting of investments called for legal grounds.

Writer Says Growing Trade With Central Asia 'Natural'

*NC0203130695 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English
28 Feb 95 p 23*

[Editorial: "Trade Between Iran, Central Asia Gains Momentum"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A high ranking Iranian delegation is heading to Uzbekistan today to discuss issues of bilateral interest such as cooperation in construction of roads and railways.

The delegation, headed by Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Euro-American Affairs, Mahmud Va'ez, will be in Tashkent at the invitation of Va'ez's Uzbek counterpart, Shah Qasem Eslamov [name as published].

The cooperation between Iran and the Central Asian republics has gained a momentum since the collapse of the former Soviet Union. In actuality, the trade was non-existent between Iran and these states during the Soviet era. The signing of multi-billion dollar contracts between Iran and these countries shows the drastic change in the nature of commercial cooperation between Iran and Central Asia.

One such important contract was the 8-billion dollar contract signed in September 1993 to explore the three oil fields in the Caspian Sea. Iran's share of the pie of this lucrative contract is about \$400 million.

Another important contract is the project to transfer the Turkmenistan gas to Europe through Iran and Turkey. The preliminary measures for laying of the pipeline will be implemented this year. It might take four years to finish this \$4 billion project.

Countries such as Malaysia, India, Indonesia and Brunei have shown an interest in doing trade with Central Asian countries through Iran. Iran's President, Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, who went on a tour of Central Asian countries, has been one of the proponents of such trade, and has made it clear that Iran is ready to act as an intermediary in the trade with Central Asia.

The fact that Iran has respected the territorial integrity of these countries and has maintained brotherly relations with them, has helped the expansion of trade. It is only natural for Iran and these countries to resume their trade because, except for the Soviet era, they have always been involved in trade for ages, going back to such trade routes as the legendary Silk Road.

Bank Announces Foreign Exchange Availability at Airport

LD0103213695 Tehran IRNA in English 2107 GMT
1 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 1, IRNA—Iran's Central Bank announced Wednesday [1 March] in order to speed up the sale of foreign exchange to the passengers who are leaving the country by air, from Saturday 4th of March foreign exchange will be offered to passengers in Mehrabad airport.

Central Bank underlined passengers who are travelling abroad can buy foreign exchange by presenting valid documents to Bank Melli foreign exchange sections in Tehran.

Nepal

Deputy Prime Minister Interviewed on Politics

BK0103101495 (Internet) The Nepal Digest in English
0600 GMT 1 Mar 95

[Report on interview with Deputy Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal by S. Wagle and C. Simkhada, undergraduates at the London School of Economics, in London on 22 February: "Pragmatic Marxist Speaks on his Marxism in Practice"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The communist leader steps out of the chauffeur-driven Mercedes in Kensington and smiles at only those who are smiling at him. He has just come from a meeting with Douglas Hurd at the Foreign Office and in a short while he is to meet a parliamentary committee at Westminster. Madhav Kumar Nepal, still in his forties, is incredibly busy these days—and this is just one of the many reasons why insiders believe that it is he who is actually the most powerful man in the kingdom now. Coming from humble backgrounds, He was a clerk at Nepal's oldest Bank before joining the then banned leftist movement. When his renamed Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist) grew both in size and popularity under the leadership of the late lamented Madan Bhandari, he was known to be a member of the famous "Gang of four" and an influential

strategist working behind the scenes. He became the General Secretary of the largest Communist faction in 1993 and life for him ever since has been less than comfortable. His fiercest critics maintain that his views and actions while an opposition leader were dangerously myopic—and even foolish. His supporters never agreed: For them, He was "Comrade Madhav" standing for ordinary men and women in the streets. For unexplained reasons, He has never faced an electorate and has been more controversial than ever after assuming power late last year. In an interview with S Wagle and C Simkhada, Undergraduates at the London School of Economics, Madhav Kumar Nepal MA, came across as a very concerned, courteous and shrewd politician. Excerpts:

[The Nepal Digest] Deputy Prime Minister, what are the reasons for your being in Europe now?

[Nepal] There are three main purposes of my visit. The first is for an exchange of ideas between our government and the various European countries. While discussing matters of economic interest, We also intend to invigorate the present levels of friendship. The second is to represent Nepal for the 51st session of the Human Rights Council Meeting. And the third is to address our Mission Heads and ambassadors based in Europe and let them know the present government's views and thoughts.

[The Nepal Digest] You have met Klaus Kinkel, Douglas Hurd and many other western leaders. What has been their general reaction to the "communist" government?

[Nepal] The response has been very good. The Germans even treated us as their state guests. They are all sympathetic to the new government and have all promised to help. They are particularly pleased at the fact that the new govt. came to power as a result of a valid democratic election and that things have been stable since. Talking of bilateral aid and assistance, many payable loans have been cancelled and Japan has already invited me over to Tokyo for furthering talks on various aspects of aid. The Americans are taking a keen interest in my visits too.

[The Nepal Digest] You recently visited India and it was reported that you were mandated to raise the issue of the 1950 treaty.

[Nepal] Yes. We have agreed to discuss and look into the matter.

[The Nepal Digest] How soon would that be?

[Nepal] I would say that a secretary level talk will begin within a month.

[The Nepal Digest] While in opposition, You accused the former government of practicing biased foreign policy. Now that you are yourself the foreign Minister, How successful do you think you have pursuing the so called "Politics of Equidistance"?

[Nepal] Speaking of the usage of terms, I have not been using the phrase "Politics of Equidistance". That would imply determining geographical distances using some sort of a measuring tape.

[The Nepal Digest] No Deputy Prime Minister, I did not use the phrase literally.

[Nepal] Yes, psychology is an important factor. Diplomatic experts make a lot of hue and cry over use of certain terms and phrases. My emphasis is on "Equality". We should not be tilted towards any one particular country. Naturally, with India our relation is based on equality, mutual respect and mutual gains. Thus, let me emphasize that we are neither "for" any country nor "against" any country. We don't entertain disputes and while making friends, we don't also lose our stance. On the whole, "Friendship Everywhere" is our guiding philosophy.

[The Nepal Digest] What is happening to the DasDhunga reports of various commissions? It has been observed that the govt. has surprisingly been very reluctant to make them public.

[Nepal] That is not true. The published reports were taken to the Public first and then to the Parliament. By Public, I mean access is given to anybody who is interested.

[The Nepal Digest] Tell us about the crux. Was it murder or an accident?

[Nepal] The latest report has said that the incident was an accident—It drew its conclusion on the basis of available information and facts and we respect the commission's verdict. We also note the limitations on any legal investigation in our country and although the conclusion reached by today's commission holds for now, I can not tell you what future commissions may conclude.

[The Nepal Digest] So, In retrospect, You must be regretting the protests and series of programmes organized by your party then calling for civil disobedience?

[Nepal] Not at all. The movement we led then had a sole purpose—Formation of an investigative commission. It is tragic that 22 of our people had to lose their lives to fulfill such a trivial demand. Had the govt. formed such a commission immediately, we would not have had to go to the streets and sacrifice 22 lives. Now, note that we did not organize those events to question why our leaders were killed etc. but to request them to form a commission that would investigate the matter and bring forward the truth. They only did this after our people were shot dead in a series of incidents involving blatant misuse of force and abuse of authority. Culture of democratic flexibility has no place for such an action.

[The Nepal Digest] While talking of opposition, Let me ask you if you are satisfied with the role of the present main opposition, The Nepali Congress?

[Nepal] I am more or less satisfied with their role.
[pause] We are all learning, aren't we? [laughs]

[The Nepal Digest] After you get back to Nepal, A Cabinet reshuffle is expected. Will it actually take place?

Also, how would you reply to those who criticized the earlier nominations on gender, regional and ethnic grounds?

[Nepal] From the Outset, the number of members in our cabinet has been few. So naturally, there has to be a reshuffle soon. On the criticisms, Let me tell you that we had tried our best to strike a balance then and are still committed but that can not be wholly successful. This is a difficult thing—No political party can achieve perfectness on those fronts. We believe that it is an individual's list of merits that should count not his/her ethnic origin. Of course, It is desirable to have a diverse representation but as I said just now, the main criterion should be one's merits.

[The Nepal Digest] Let's talk about the king. On one hand, you have these leftist republican parties who believe that they are your allies. On the other we have the whole institution of monarchy whose unbiased and passive role is vital to today's political climate. How are you handling the two forces together?

[Nepal] Now, the role and duties of the king and his institution as a whole have already been determined by the constitution. We have seen that things are being done as per the constitutional guidelines and for me to be completely satisfied at that is very natural. Talking of other communist parties, every nation has to confront extremist views both on the left and right at certain times. It's the people and their verdict that decides which dogma is acceptable. On our allies, Every nationalist and democrat supports our party. All those in favour of social justice and progress are also on our side. Parties who think that they can work together with us agreeing on certain issues are always welcome. This is the essence of democracy. No one party supports the other all the time—They work together when they have common ends and work independently at times of disagreement. Now, In a democracy we can not tell other parties not to do what they do—we can't impose our will on them.

[The Nepal Digest] Can you elaborate on the whole issue of economic liberalisation especially in light of your decision to halt privatisation but welcome foreign investment?

[Nepal] There are two things to this. We have realised that there exists an immense role and prospect for the private sector in Nepal. But we do not agree that privatisation is the sole solution to all our economic problems. We oppose the view that the state should refrain from all the responsibilities and push all our helpless people into the market cycles. We thus seek to achieve a respectable balance between the important roles of the market and the social duties of the state. The state controls and directs the economy as a whole and this in English, is called "Macro Control". We can not however deal with the "Micro Controls". What the state does through its monetary and banking policies is that it ensures that the economy is on the right course. Having said this, we are also strictly opposed to the entire state control of small firms and industries.

[The Nepal Digest] So it sounds as if you are not too enthusiastic about the whole process of liberalisation.

[Nepal] No, Not quite. Liberalisation must and should take place. But it also depends on what you understand by liberalisation. Let me make this clear again: We are in favour of openness and we should allow the market forces to play their role.

[The Nepal Digest] Tell us Deputy Prime Minister, How long do you expect to last?

[Nepal] Oh.....Full five years.

[The Nepal Digest] Confident?

[Nepal] Yes. Very so. [laughs]

Diplomatic Relations To Develop With Azerbaijan

LD0203152895 Khatmandu Radio Nepal in English
1415 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Kingdom of Nepal and the Azerbaijani Republic, desiring to develop between them the relations of friendship and cooperation have decided to establish diplomatic relations at an ambassadorial level in accordance with the provisions of the Vienna convention on diplomatic relations 1961 and on the basis of the principles enshrined in the charter of the United Nations. With this the number of countries having diplomatic relations with Nepal has reached 108.

Prime Minister, DPRK Discuss Cooperation

LD0203150895 Kathmandu Radio Nepal in English
1415 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Hwang Chang-yop, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly and secretary of Workers' Party of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, called on Prime Minister Mana Mohan Adhikari in Kathmandu today. Matters of mutual interest including economic and technical cooperation between Nepal and the DPRK figured during the talks according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On the occasion, the DPRK delegation has also assured the prime minister that the DPRK will extend meaningful cooperation in the fields of agriculture, irrigation, land reform, and small hydropower projects.

Pakistan

Government Decides To Expel Illegal Immigrants

BK0303015595 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 2 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The government has decided to expel illegal immigrants from the country and to enact a fresh legislation to control the illegal entry of foreigners into Pakistan. This was stated by N.D. Khan, the federal minister for law, justice, and parliamentary affairs, in an

interview with PAKISTAN PRESS INTERNATIONAL in Islamabad today. He said there are reports about the involvement of these illegal immigrants in subversive activities and other crimes.

Replying to a question, the federal minister said punitive action will be taken against those who help illegal immigrants in getting forged national identity cards and passports. The federal minister said the government is determined to unearth illicit arms. It will not allow the violation of the law of the land and deal firmly with those who dare to do so. He said those holding the government responsible for the situation in Sindh remained in power for three years and could not do anything to improve the situation. N.D. Khan lamented that the opposition is exploiting the Sindh situation for political gains instead of extending cooperation to the government on matters of vital national interest. Terming the Karachi situation as complex and fragile, he said it is the by-product of the 11 year-long dictatorial regime.

Fundamentalist Threat to 'Ruling Elite' Viewed

BK0303050395 Islamabad THE NATION in English 2 Mar 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Threat of 'fundamentalism'"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The apprehension that the rise of so-called 'Islamic fundamentalism' is likely to pose a serious threat to the country's ruling elite is not entirely without substance, albeit to draw a parallel with Algeria, Afghanistan or Egypt would amount to 'oversimplifying' the phenomenon. Some religious outfits in Pakistan, whether formally called political parties or functioning as pressure groups, have over the years become increasingly assertive, and their aggressive campaign for recognition and clout has sometimes found expression in acts of violence. Ostensibly, the cause they claim to represent is a matter of indisputable faith for the populace, and thus vulnerable to outbursts of emotional frenzy. Consequently, ever since Ziaul Haq deemed it politically expedient to play the 'Islamic card' and used the 'religious lobby' to legitimise his rule, the government, notwithstanding the advent of democratic rule, has virtually been a hostage to great pressure and unwilling to confront the extremists even when they were making demands not in conformity with law and the Constitution. There is no denying the fact that some sectarian elements have now emerged as a power to reckon with, and are, by and large, using the language of force to spread their message. Nonetheless, their clout basically stems from their ability to raise a corps of followers willing to pursue missions of hatred and terror, and of late, the facility to acquire weapons and use them with impunity. The religious groupings of all hues have, however, not succeeded in capturing the popular imagination, and as has been comprehensively brought home by their dismal track record in electoral politics, are by no means capable of mustering sufficient mass support to be acknowledged as serious contenders for power.

They are also far from being a unified force. On the contrary, they present the lamentable spectacle of a house divided against itself, and split into warring factions, are primarily engaged in an inter-sectarian liquidation campaign.

Pakistan was conceived as a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Subcontinent, but the fathers of the Pakistan Movement were absolutely clear that they were not striving for a theocratic state, and had publicly pledged their commitment to democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights. Had there been any doubts in the minds of the people about the bona fides of the liberal school of thought leaders, they would not have so wholeheartedly rallied behind the Muslim League in preference to the religious leadership of that time. The people of Pakistan have consciously opted for a democratic way of life and, so long as the beneficiaries of the popular mandate do not outrightly betray the people's trust to make a mockery of the rule of law, the oracles of extremist fanaticism are not going to find favour with the people. Needless to say, the onus of warding off the threat and salvaging the democratic way of life is on the ruling elite, which must set the tone for a democratic dispensation towards decision-making, resolving differences and, above all, in dealing with political opponents.

Editorial Questions 'Unofficial' Nuclear Talks

BK0303050495 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN
OBSERVER in English 2 Mar 95 p 4

[Editorial: "Secret nuclear talks and our FO"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The equivocators of Pak Foreign Office [FO] are at it again. After Gwadar and Chakwal, they are exercising their ingenuity on the four power unofficial nuclear talks involving Pakistan, India, China and the US. They have informed us that the talks were private. Fair enough. No one disputes that. What we would like to know is whether these secret parleys have the official blessing or not. Apparently, they have; because our man in India Riaz Khokhar did attend one of the sessions. Foreign office says he attended in his personal capacity. But he could not have done so without the prior knowledge and permission of Islamabad and that is where the rub is. The talks are a part of what is known as track-2 diplomacy and Islamabad is on record as having said at the time of recent gathering of two countries' intellectuals that the time was not ripe for this type of diplomacy. A broad section of our public opinion

opposed the moot on the grounds that it would suit Indian design rather than lower regional tensions. These negotiations should also be disowned as they are the core of alternative people-to-people diplomacy.

The nation has other apprehensions as well since the subject under discussion by the four nation group is nuclear. We have been told so many lies by this and other governments on the issue that one is justified in assuming that another sell-out might be in the offing. Secrecy in this context means that the talks are going along the lines not favoured by the majority of our people. Suspicions are rife on other counts too. Our nuclear cat is out of bag, all of it. We froze our nuclear programmes as far back as 1988; in case we may digress from the straight and narrow, we have monitoring station at Chakwal close to Kahuta. We are effectively a non-nuclear power now. What chips do we have at these negotiations? What is their purpose? The only reason behind the dialogue seems to be to beg India to dismantle its nuclear facilities since we have unilaterally done so. But for that, we do not need such long round of complex negotiations.

These talks could have been of value since they are region-based, if we had not thrown away all our cards. No one in his right mind will oppose efforts to lower tensions in the region. The immense potential of normalisation between the two antagonistic nations is staggering. The two sides can divert the bulk of their defence budget to the social sector. For centuries the subcontinent has been part of one market. The degree of interdependence will make bilateral trade highly beneficial for both sides. But that bright promise cannot unfold unless there is earnest effort by New Delhi to solve the core issues. We are sad to say that the circumstances point to the other direction. India's attitude on issues that divide the two countries is hardening for two reasons. First the rise of communal politics and second the Western policy of delinking economics from politics is serving as disincentive to India to have good relations with its neighbours. In these circumstances, there is neither logic nor pragmatic value in these talks. On the contrary they are causing a lot of unease this side of Indo-Pak border. The fact that our FO had to issue an explanation testifies to the wide-spread fears triggered by these ill-conceived negotiations. It may be added here that nuclear issue is not yet amenable to technical discussions: it is still bogged down in differences over fundamentals.

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